

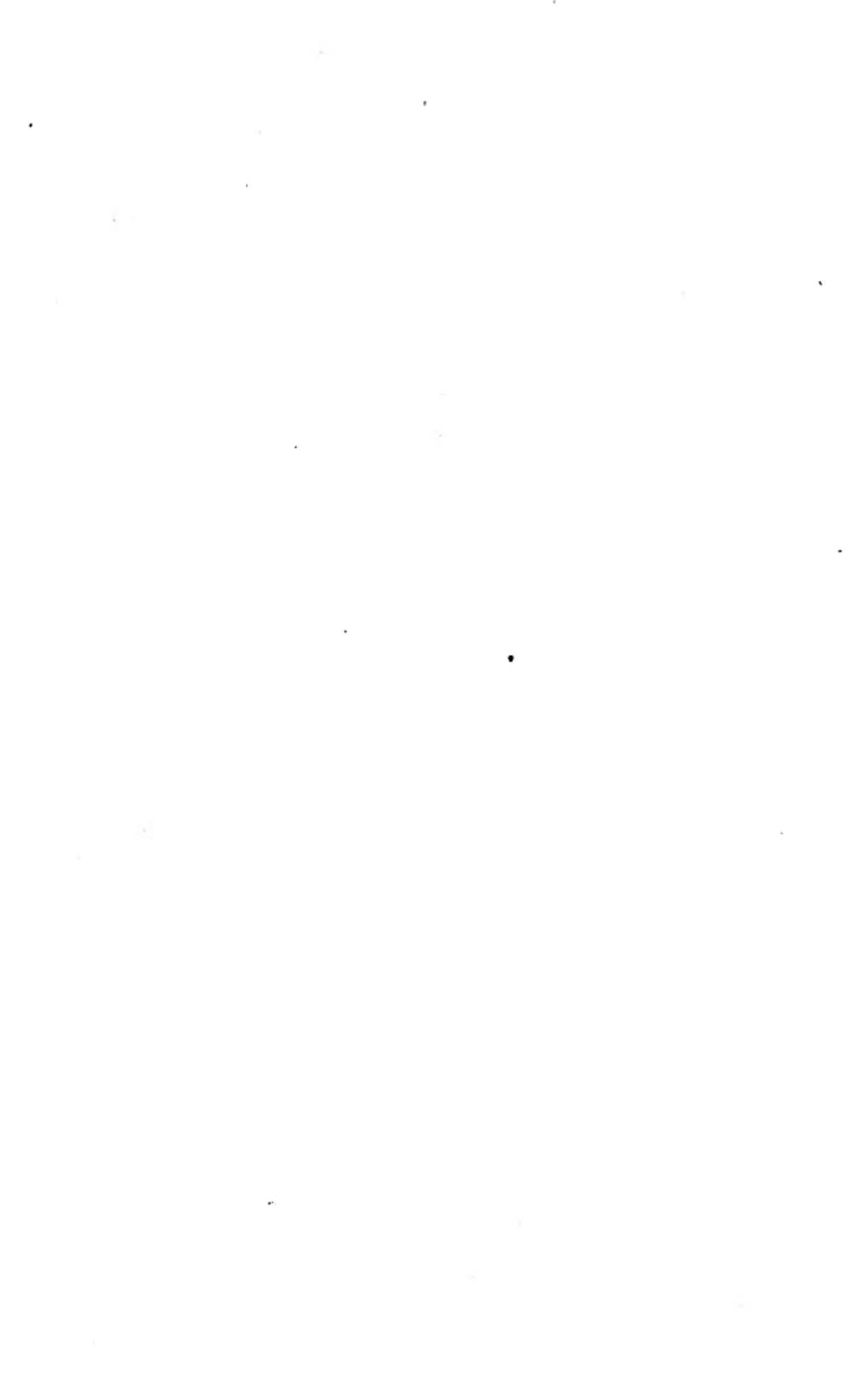


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42







LITTLE LIZZIE AND THE FAIRIES.



THE
PLAYMATE

A
PLEASANT COMPANION
FOR SPARE HOURS

OLD BOND STREET

E. DALZIEL

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** *The Engravings on Wood have been executed by George and Edward Dalziel,
Walter Mason, and Russell Sedgfield.*





THE PLAYMATE'S ADDRESS.

IT is a holiday. Come, then, let us take a quiet stroll along the meadow, and up by yon fragrant hedge-row, and let us sit together on that mossy bank beneath the shade of those overhanging trees, and look upon the far-extending landscape, and I will tell you tales that will keep you listening there for hours together; for this is summer-time, and it is very pleasant to be in the clear air, and hear the birds singing through the woods.

But when the winter evenings bring their cheerful fireside gatherings, and boys and girls crowd round the blazing hearth at home, and enjoy it the more because of the cold nights at school, I will beg for a snug seat in the corner, and will tell you elder ones long tales of wars and travels, of famous men, of knight-errantry, and of days of the olden time; to the gentle girls, your sisters, I will sing sweet ballads, and read poetry and pleasant stories, full of charming adventures; and to you, youngsters, I will unfold the wondrous marvels that are found in faërie land and ancient fable, and the greater marvels still that are discovered in the wide domains of Nature. And though you shall all be merry and laugh heartily at my humorous histories, and though you shall all be sad, and almost weep at my pathetic ballads; yet withal will we be wise, and ever will we bear in mind our motto, "*Inter folia fructus.*" There shall be fruit among these leaves, not such sour-flavoured windfalls as you too often pick up, but fruit that is ripe and good, and that will be pleasant as well as profitable.

Do you love pictures? I will give you such as a playmate has seldom offered you before. Pictures by artists well known to fame. Pictures that will serve for copies to the cleverest of you; that will not only please, but will teach you, and lead you to an early knowledge of all the best principles of art.

In conclusion, my only desire is, that you may all, young and old, consider me what I wish to be, a pleasant companion for your spare hours, and that I may be received with renewed joy at every fresh visit to your homes.

YOUR PLAYMATE.

TRADITIONAL BALLADS. EDITED BY FELIX SUMMERLY.

VALENTINE AND URSINE. PART I.

WHEN Flora 'gins to deck the fields
With colours fresh and fine,
Then holy clerks their matins sing
To good Saint Valentine!
The king of France that morning fair
He would a hunting ride:
To Artois forest prancing forth
In all his princely pride.
To grace his sports a courtly train
Of gallant peers attend;
And with their loud and cheerful cries
The hills and valleys rend.

Through the deep forest swift they pass,
Through woods and thickets wild;
When down within a lonely dell
They found a new-born child;
All in a scarlet kercher laid
Of silk so fine and thin:
A golden mantle wrapt him round,
Pinn'd with a silver pin.
The sudden sight surpriz'd them all;
The courtiers gather'd round;
They look, they call, the mother seek;
No mother could be found.

At length the king himself drew near,
And as he gazing stands,
The pretty babe look'd up and smil'd,
And stretch'd his little hands.

New, by the rood, king Pepin says,
This child is passing fair:
I wot he is of gentle blood;
Perhaps some prince's heir.

Go bear him home unto my court
With all the care ye may:
Let him be christen'd Valentine,
In honour of this day:

And look me out some crunning nurse;
Well nurtur'd let him be;
Nor aught be wanting that becomes
A bairn of high degree.

Thus grew the little Valentine,
Belov'd of king and peers;
And shew'd in all he spake or did
A wit beyond his years.

But chief in gallant feats of arms
He did himself advance,
That ere he grew to man's estate
He had no peer in France.

And now the early down began
To shade his youthful chin;
When Valentine was dubb'd a knight,
That he might glory win.

"A boon, a boon, my gracious liege,
I beg a boon of thee!
The first adventure that befalls,
May be reserv'd for me."

"The first adventure shall be thine;"
The king did smiling say:
Nor many days, when lo! there came
Three palmers clad in gray.

"Help, gracious lord," they weeping said;
And knelt, as it was meet:
"From Artois forest we are come,
With weak and weary feet.

"Within those deep and dreary woods
There dwells a savage boy;
Whose fierce and mortal rage doth yield
Thy subjects dire annoy.

"Mong ruthless bears he sure was bred;
He lurks within their den;
With bears he lives; with bears he feeds,
And drinks the blood of men.

"To more than savage strength he joins
A more than human skill:
Nor arms, nor cunning may suffice
His cruel rage to still."

Up then rose sir Valentine,
And claim'd that arduous deed.
"Go forth and conquer," said the king,
"And great shall be thy meed."

To Artois forest he repairs
With all the haste he may;
And soon he spies the savage youth
A rending of his prey.

His unkempt hair all matted hung
His shaggy shoulders round:
His eager eye all fiery glow'd:
His face with fury frown'd.

Like eagles' talons grew his nails:
His limbs were thick and strong;
And dreadful was the knotted oak
He bare with him along.

Soon as sir Valentine approach'd,
He starts with sudden spring;
And yelling forth a hideous howl,
He made the forests ring.

As when a tiger fierce and fell
Hath spied a passing roe,
And leaps at once upon his throat;
So sprung the savage foe;

So lightly leap'd with furious force
The gentle knight to seize:
But met his tall uplifted spear,
Which sunk him on his knees.

A second stroke so stiff and stern
Had laid the savage low;
But springing up, he rais'd his club,
And aim'd a dreadful blow.

The watchful warrior bent his head,
And shunn'd the coming stroke;
Upon his taper spear it fell,
And all to shivers broke.

Then lighting nimbly from his steed,
He drew his burnish'd brand:
The savage quick as lightning flew
To wrest it from his hand.

Three times he grasp'd the silver hilt;
Three times he felt the blade;
Three times it fell with furious force;
Three ghastly wounds it made.



Then closing fast with furious gripe
He clasp'd the champion round,
And with a strong and sudden twist
He laid him on the ground.

But soon the knight, with active spring,
O'erturn'd his hairy foe :
And now between their sturdy fists
Pass'd many a bruising blow.

They roll'd and grappled on the ground,
And there they struggled long :
Skilful and active was the knight ;
The savage he was strong.

But brutal force and savage strength
To art and skill must yield ;
Sir Valentine at length prevail'd,
And won the well-fought field.

Then binding strait his conquer'd foe
Fast with an iron chain,
He ties him to his horse's tail,
And leads him o'er the plain.

To court his hairy captive soon
Sir Valentine doth bring ;
And kneeling down upon his knee,
Presents him to the king.

With loss of blood and loss of strength
The savage tamer grew ;
And to Sir Valentine became
A servant tried and true.

And 'cause with bears he erst was bred,
Ursine they call his name ;
A name which unto future times
The Muses shall proclaim.

THE HERMIT.

By R. Reinick. Translated by Alfred Sothorn.

A BRAVE old soldier, after having fought nobly in many battles, returned home from the wars poor and weary. When he came back to his village, he found that the enemy had killed all the women and children, and had burnt his house to the ground, together with all the property he had possessed. He went from house to house begging his neighbours to give him some bread, or work

by which he might gain his living; but some said, "We cannot give you work, you are too old and weak;" and others, "We cannot give you bread, go and work for it;" generally they said, "We want bread for ourselves, and have none to spare."

At length the old soldier became so averse to mankind, that he resolved to become a hermit. And he procured a cowl and a prayer-book, and an axe and a spade, and with these he went out into the mountains.

A large wood extended over hills and valleys, and in the midst of it there rose a higher and more extensive chain of rocks, covered with grass and flowers, and shaded by beautiful old trees. Beneath



these trees the old soldier built a wooden hut, and there he hung up his sword; and he carefully inclosed the surrounding spot, so that no wild beast could break through; and he felt more happy among the rocks and wilds than amongst mankind.

The wood beneath was generally reported to be haunted, and

the people of the surrounding country feared to walk there. But the hermit thought that he could not be worse off than he had been in his village, and he was not afraid. The whole place was full of beautiful animals,—stags, hares, rabbits, and many others; they were tame and docile, and often surrounded him in his walks, looking earnestly, as if they had something important to tell him.

In one of his wanderings the old man met with a white roe, of slender and beautiful shape, and with gentle and intelligent eyes. No sooner did it perceive the hermit than it walked gracefully up to him and licked his hand, while he, in return, stroked and caressed it. The animal followed him to his hut, and from that time never left his side. On the same evening the other animals also approached nearer to him, and wild cats, pigeons, and all singing birds now built their nests in the neighbourhood of the hermitage. The old man seemed to have obtained the love of all the animals, particularly of the beautiful roe, which he cherished and nursed as if a little child. Near to his own couch he made it a bed of moss and rushes, he fed it out of his own hand with the sweetest herbs, and often conversed with it for hours together, for the animal always seemed to understand him and sympathise with his fate. Wherever the roe appeared it was greeted with joy and reverence by the other animals, who eagerly vied with each other in serving it. When it passed through the wood, spotted butterflies surrounded it in the same manner that footmen would wait upon the coach of some great lady. Proud stags made way respectfully before it, and bent back with their horns the thickets and branches that obstructed the way. The birds plucked all kinds of beautiful flowers, and hung them upon the branches, and strewed them on the path before it, and sang together in such sweet harmony, that the music resounded like a concert through the quiet grove. Every time that the roe laid itself to rest, a little bird came flying out of the bushes, and sang softly till it slept; and a wild cat sprang from the tree, and placing itself upon the moss near it, fanned the air with its bushy tail; while the active lizards snapped up all the gnats that seemed likely to sting it. In the morning when the roe arose from its bed, and each time before it went out, a pair of white doves flew down from the roof, and delicately smoothed its hair with their beaks.

It happened once, very strangely, that upon a summer morning the sky became overcast with clouds, and the air sultry and very oppressive. The hermit sat quietly in his cell, reading his prayer-

book, but the roe could obtain no repose ; it did not eat nor drink, but wandered restlessly here and there, until at length it ran down into the cool wood, and threw itself upon a large plot of soft grass: all the animals of the wood—a thousand and more—came, and at a short distance laid themselves in a circle around it, and on the trees sat the beautiful many-coloured birds, like ladies in a balcony. All the creatures watched silently around the roe, until, overpowered by the great heat, they one after another fell asleep, and at length the roe itself fell asleep also. Only the hares, who stood as sentinels, kept guard with pricked ears. Suddenly there sounded through the still wood the barking of dogs and the shrill blast of horns : the sounds approached nearer and nearer, till, all at once, a young prince appeared, surrounded by many hunters on horse and foot, who had accidentally lost their way in the enchanted wood. The hares whistled, and the other animals sprang up and pressed around to defend the roe, who, starting up, fled swiftly away. The young prince, however, had caught sight of it, and cried, “Whoever kills that beautiful animal shall be put to death ; but whoever catches it and brings it to me alive I will present him with a golden hunting-horn !” Immediately the whole company, with the young prince at their head, followed after the roe, who flew like an arrow out of the wood up the rocks, and breaking into the cell where the old man yet prayed, strove to conceal itself in the folds of his garment. The prince was quickly at the door of the hut, and soon perceived where it had hid itself. He called to the hermit, desiring him to give it up ; but the hermit enclosed it in his arms, and said, “I cannot do that : whoever seeks protection on my threshold shall find it.” “Then thou shalt die !” cried the young man, as he raised his spear. But these words awoke in the old man his former warlike spirit, and in an instant he snatched his sword from the wall. A combat began, both struck for a long time with formidable skill, until at last the strength of the old man failed him, and the young prince, having struck his sword out of his hand, was about to rush upon and kill him, when the roe, perceiving the danger of its defender, sprang between them and received the wound which had been intended for the hermit. There lay the tender little animal upon the grass, with its life-blood streaming from its mouth. When, lo ! instead of flowing upon the ground, the red blood spread itself over its whole body, and veiled it as with a beautiful purple garment, and at the same time its horns grew into a golden crown ; at last, instead of the

roe, there lay in its place a most lovely princess, with her eyes closed lightly, as if asleep. When the young prince beheld this beautiful lady, instantly a deep affection for her possessed his heart, and he sank upon his knees before her. "Awake, sweet princess," he said, "and thou shalt be my queen;" and then he pressed a kiss upon her rosy lips. At the same moment a mighty whirlwind rose in the air, the lightning flashed, the thunder pealed across the heavens, and the earth shook terribly. Then the young princess cast up her eyes, and raising herself said to the king's son, "The time is now fulfilled, and the spell is broken. I and my courtiers have been transformed by an evil charm for a hundred years. I accept you for my husband, and all that is mine is thine also." As she spoke thus the sun again broke out from behind the clouds, and in the woods beneath there appeared a most splendid palace, with high towers and golden pinnacles. At the same instant, in spite of the distance, it might be perceived that the wood swarmed with courtiers and attendants, upon horse and foot; and the blast of the trumpets, and the beating of drums resounded on every side. Now, instead of a wild cat, there sat upon the tree an intelligent page; and on the roof, instead of the turtle-doves, there sat a pair of ladies-in-waiting; and instead of singing-birds, there now sat in the bushes all kinds of musicians, who played upon all kinds of instruments, and sang sweet songs. From the wood there now approached a splendid procession of horses and servants, to escort the prince and his bride to their palace. When they had mounted their steeds they both wished to take the old man with them, in order that he might become their prime minister, and live with them continually. But this the hermit refused, saying, "Leave me here in my solitude: I mingle no more with mankind. To me the beams of the sun are more beautiful than your gold, and the rays of the moon more lovely than your silver; the stars are my precious stones, and the wide heaven is my palace. Seek me sometimes in my cell to tell me of your prosperity, which I shall always earnestly pray for."

And now, with heartfelt gratitude for his protection, the queen and her husband departed. It was not long before other kind animals came to the hermit, they were not so wonderful as the former, but he took care of them with the same tenderness. When he died the young prince interred him in a magnificent monument, and the princess planted beautiful flowers around his grave, and moistened them with her tears.



LITTLE FREDDY AND HIS FIDDLE.

By A. L. Grimm. Translated by Madame de Chatelain.

THERE was once a little boy, who was not at all well grown, for he was much smaller than he ought to have been for his age; and his legs were even crooked. But he was of a lively, intelligent disposition, and his head was full of waggery.

His parents had died when he was very young, and had left him nothing whatever for a legacy. He therefore hired himself as a servant to a peasant. But when he had been in his service three years, he went one day to his master, the peasant, and said:—

"I have served you honestly, and to the best of my power, for three years, and I now think of going into the world, and making my fortune. Be so good, therefore, as to count me out the wages I have earned, and let me go my ways."

The peasant then went to his closet, and having opened it, he was fumbling a long while amongst his money, till at length he brought out three small farthings, which he gave to Freddy, saying,—

"See, here are your wages—a farthing for each year. I think such a little fellow as you may very well be satisfied with that. And if you spend them judiciously, you may make your fortune even so; for he who is careless of farthings does not deserve to have dollars. Good luck speed you on your way."



Little Freddy took the three farthings, and put them joyfully into a leathern purse, which he had made himself out of a mouse's skin, and hid it in his pocket. He then went to take leave of the peasant's wife and children, and sallied forth into the wide world. As often as he stopped to rest, or to spend the night under a tree, or was allowed by some good souls to take refuge in a barn, so often was he sure to draw out his mouseskin purse, to count his three farthings, and to see whether any of them were lost.

He had run about the world in this manner for several days, and as yet no opportunity had offered itself for placing his money

to advantage. One evening, however, he reached a chain of great rocky mountains, and having climbed to the summit, looked all about him to see which way he had better go, in order to reach either a village or a mill, where he might spend the night. But as far as the moonlight enabled him to see, he could perceive nothing but woods and wooded mountains. He therefore resolved to remain where he was, and having sought for a place that was overgrown with soft moss, he laid himself down as comfortably as he could, to go to sleep for the night. But before he fell asleep, he once more drew out his mouseskin purse, in order to see whether any of his farthings were lost. As he was counting them in his palm by moonlight, a strange sort of misty shadow fell upon his hand. On looking up to see the cause of it, he perceived a man standing before him, whose face was quite covered with a grey beard that reached down to his feet ; his robe hung about him in a great many folds, and he had drawn a part of it over his head, so that his face alone was visible ; and though he remained stock-still himself, yet his dress appeared to be fluttering up and down, and all round him, in one incessant whirl. This gave him an unearthly appearance, and, in good sooth, he was no mortal man ; and when our merry little hero looked up, and could not rightly make him out, and one moment took him for a man, and the next for a column of smoke, he began at last to feel a shuddering horror creeping all over his frame, and, hastily thrusting his three little farthings into his bag, rose from the ground, and was going to run away. But just as he had risen, and was about to scamper off, he felt himself held fast by his hind hair ; and although he was frightened at the sight of the apparition, he was obliged to look back. And now the figure seemed again to be an old man in a grey rain-cloak. The man perceived his alarm, and said, good-naturedly enough,—

“ Never fear, Freddy ; I won’t do you any harm.”

Little Freddy then breathed more freely, and said,—

“ Now this is kind of you to speak at last, that I may know you really are a human being ; but it is still kinder of you not to do me any harm. And you will not take away my three little farthings that I have earned in three years either, will you ?”

“ Unless you finish by giving me them willingly,” answered the grey man, “ you shall take them all three away with you.”

“ Well, then, in that case,” said little Freddy, “ there is no hurry ; and you will now be a very welcome bed-fellow.”

“ I don’t want to be your bed-fellow,” growled the grey man

in his beard, in an angry tone ; "but," continued he, "in order to despatch my business with you at once, (for I have still a journey of one hundred miles to perform to-night), tell me, what will you take for your three farthings ?"



Little Freddy now perceived that he had to deal neither with a human being nor a column of smoke, but with a sturdy mountain spirit, who wanted his three farthings because they had, perhaps, been coined out of the copper that had been dug from the bowels of this very mountain ; for the little fellow was shrewd and cunning enough : he therefore answered him :—

"Yes, I shall not mind giving you *one* of my three farthings, if you will give me a fowling-piece with which I shall be able to kill every bird that I aim at."

The grey spirit immediately handed him a very handsome gun, as long again as little Freddy himself, before the latter could ever perceive where he took it from. But Freddy said,—

"Ay, but I must try whether it's a good one before I pay for it ;" and taking a leaf on a distant tree as a mark, he shot at it, and the leaf flew away as if it had never existed. Then Freddy joyfully reached him a farthing. But the Grey Spirit said :—

"You have asked for nothing at all out of the way. Now take more care, and ask for something better for the second farthing."

“Oh, yes !” said little Freddy, laughing. “You see I’m not able to dance, myself, because my legs are too crooked ; but I have a great passion for dancing, and it delights me beyond measure to see others jumping about in the wildest glee. Therefore, for the second farthing I shall only ask for a fiddle that will force every body to dance, whether they have a mind or not, the moment I begin fiddling.”

The Grey Spirit gave him likewise the fiddle he wished for, besides its bow. And again Freddy had not seen where he took it from. He said, however, as he gave it him :—

“That was again a very foolish wish, Freddy. Now you are come to the last farthing, so mind and wish for something wiser.”

So Freddy gave him the second farthing, and said :—

“Well, then, I wish that nobody may be able to refuse me the first request that I shall make them.”

“That’s something sensible at last,” said the Grey Spirit. “I shall grant this wish with pleasure. Go your ways, it shall be so.”

And Freddy then gave him the third farthing. Meanwhile a soft little breeze blew across the mountain top, and as the Grey Spirit retired it seemed to the little boy as though he was again nothing but a shadowy vapour chased away by the wind ; for the harder the wind blew behind him, the faster he appeared to hasten away, till he was soon quite lost in the distant shadows of night, which were now drawing around.

And little Freddy laughed in his sleeve, and rejoiced heartily over his valuable presents, and hopped about on one leg, holding the fowling-piece in one hand and the fiddle in the other, and cried out, over and over again : “That was a foolish fellow with his misty gown ! — a very foolish fellow, indeed !” And he could not get to sleep the whole night, for he was afraid, were he to close his eyes, he should wake early the next morning and find it was all a dream ; still he was obliged to rest himself, for he had trudged from a great distance that same day : he therefore sat down, and awaited the dawn of morning, wide awake.

When the stars began to grow pale, and the breeze blew more sharply over the mountain tops, our little boy rose from his seat, and strolled down on the other side of the steep rocks, when he was joined by a monk, who was returning from a village in the mountains, where he had been making a collection for his convent. On his shoulder he carried a wallet filled with smoked meat and eggs, and other presents that benevolent, pious housewives had given

him for his convent ; and when the monk approached him, the little boy greeted him, and asked, "Where do you come from so early?"

"I come from the nearest village," said the monk, "and I have been collecting for my convent ; and now I am going into the town there below, in order to see what the good folks will give me."

"Then," said little Freddy, "we will go together, for I'm going there too."

"Indeed!" said the monk, with a groan. "The annual fair is held there to-day. I suppose you are going to play on your fiddle, and to earn some money?"

"Yes, yes," answered little Freddy, "that is what I mean to do ;" and he laughed in his sleeve, for he was thinking of a prank that he intended playing the monk.

When they got a little further, the latter perceived a wild dove sitting upon a tree, and he said to Freddy: "Look, my son, what a fat little dove is sitting there!"

"Yes, it is a pretty little dove," said Freddy. "I like doves, they are such gentle creatures, and do nobody any harm."

"Ah ! and they taste so deliciously!" said the monk, and stood still, and kept looking at it. "Yes," continued he, "it is a good fat one ; and it would be a most dainty morsel, were it roasted and stuffed ! Come, now, do shoot me that fat dove if you can."

"Willingly," said Freddy ; "only you must pick it up yourself, for it will fall just amongst the brambles, and I can't climb over them with my short legs ; and I should be afraid, too, of the thorns that would scratch me terribly."

"Let me alone for getting it when it once lies there," said the monk. "My cowl is thick, and the thorns can't pierce it."

"But we are now in Lent, and you must not eat flesh," returned Freddy. "Now do let the poor creature live ; you can't keep it fresh till you are allowed to eat meat again."

"Well, but you won't betray me," said the monk ; "and if nobody else sees me, I sha'n't mind eating flesh even in Lent, because then it's no sin."

"Indeed!" said Freddy. "So what is not seen is no sin?"

"No, no ! my son," answered the monk.

Little Freddy was annoyed by the monk's greediness and his want of conscience, and he thought to himself: "Wait a moment, and you shall pay for this." And he turned to him again and said: "Very well, if you'll fetch it, I'll shoot it down ;" and he immediately brought it down, and it fell right in the middle of the

brambles. The monk hastened to fetch it, and having climbed over the front brambles he picked the bird up. But in the mean time little Freddy had taken up his fiddle, and passed the bow over it, saying, "I must see whether my fiddle is in good order." And as he scraped the strings up and down with the bow, he struck up a lively dance, although he had never learned to fiddle in his life.

But no sooner did the monk catch the sound of the merry tune than he began to dance in the brambles, painful as it was to one so fat and well-fed as he. And now he lifted his right foot, and hopped about on the left one; then he lifted his left foot, and hopped about on the right, springing very high each time, and dancing till all the eggs in his bag were broken to pieces, and the yellow liquor streamed all down his cowl; and he hopped about till his fat cheeks, and still fatter body, were shaking again; and he panted, and kept calling between whiles, "Cease!—Cease, my son!—Cease, or you will put an end to me! Cease! or I shall dance myself to death!"

"No," said Freddy, "you must first have a jig, which is a still livelier measure than this;" and he began fiddling, and the monk began dancing anew, till he was nearly breathless. This delighted the little boy very much, especially as the thorns and brambles stuck to the monk's cowl, and held him so fast, that he was obliged to tear himself loose in the dance, while the fragments of his cowl hung upon the briary hedge; and the monk might beg and pray as he would, the little rogue continued fiddling away as hard as he could.

The monk at last exclaimed: "I will give you all the money I have collected if you'll stop. Do, pray, give over, or you'll be the death of me!"

So Freddy at length stopped, and let him recover his breath. And the monk wiped the perspiration from his brow, and drew a long breath, and disentangled his cowl from the brambles, and came out. But when little Freddy claimed his money, he not only would not give it him, but reprimanded him besides for having, with his accursed fiddle, forced him to dance when he ought to have shewn him more respect.

But little Freddy threatened to strike up the jig again if he did not immediately pull out the money which he had promised to give him. Then the fat monk begged him not to do any such thing, and that he would give him what he wished; so he took his bag off his shoulder: but when he saw how all his eggs were

broken, and had streamed away, he sighed deeply, and said,—“To think of God’s good gifts being spoiled in this manner! How many an excellent lenten-dish might have been made out of them!—and now they’ll do nobody any good.”

But little Freddy laughed, and said: “Don’t regret your eggs, good father! Haven’t you had a merry egg-dance instead? Only thrust your hand into the egg sauce and fish out your purse, and don’t make a long job of it, or else I’ll set you a-dancing again.”

The monk sighed, “Heaven take pity on me!—I have fallen into the hands of a most reckless rogue.” And he put his hand into his bag and drew forth his purse; and Freddy doffed his little red cap and held it out, and the monk emptied his money into it..

The waggish little fellow then put the money into his pocket, and said to the monk: “Well, I thank you for paying me so handsomely for the small amount of trouble I have taken!”

“Yes,” said the monk; “and may another pay you in such coin as you deserve.”

But little Freddy only laughed, and made no answer, and pursued his way in high glee, while the monk walked along sulkily on the other side of the road. And when they reached the town, and passed by the Swan inn, the little boy said, “Now, farewell, Sir Monk! I hope you’ll enjoy the fat dove at your dinner. And mind you collect plenty of money for your convent, in order to make up for your loss! I am going in here to give them a taste of my fiddle, and play the folks something that shall make them merry and set them a-dancing.” And so he let the monk go his ways, and he walked up the steps, and went and placed himself at a table in the room, and called for half a pint of wine; and after he had sat there awhile, he began to fiddle, and all the guests began to dance with great delight; and even the landlord and the waiters began to dance about amongst the guests.

It pleased them all, however, vastly well, for they were a pack of jolly companions, and they paid him handsomely; and as often as he stopped, they bid him play them something new. And the people who passed by in the street began to dance likewise, when they heard the fiddle.

But the monk was very angry with little Freddy for having taken all his money, and so he went before the judge of the town and lodged a complaint against him. The judge then said:

“If we did but know where the rogue hides himself, we’d take good care to punish him for his pranks.”



"Well, then," said the monk, "only send constable Holdfast after him, and let him go to the Swan inn, and see whether he does not find there a little boy with crooked legs, who has got a fiddle and a long fowling-piece."

So the judge sent his constable after him. But when he reached the Swan inn he found every thing topsy-turvy; people were dancing about in the street, and in the hall, and in the room; and little Freddy was standing on the table and fiddling away with a roguish look, and enjoying the fun of seeing every body dancing round him. And when constable Holdfast heard the fiddle, he too had half a mind to trip it "on the light fantastic toe." And it was a great piece of luck for him that Freddy stopped to take a moment's rest, and the dance ceased, or else Holdfast must have capered about with the rest.

He now went up to him, and taking him by the sleeve,—

"Holloa! my friend," said he, "have I found you at last? Come along with me."

Now little Freddy was curious to know what he wanted with him, and so he went willingly enough. For he thought,

"Should the worst come to the worst, I can but beg him to let me go again; for every body is obliged to grant my first request."

But when the constable took him before the judge, beside whom sat the monk, he then saw that the latter had accused him. And when the judge said to him,—

"Now confess the truth at once, you rogue! Have you not done as the reverend gentleman there says you have? Didn't you play off your pranks upon him, and take away his money?"

"Yes, Mr. Judge," said our little Freddy; "I cannot deny it."

The judge then called out angrily,—

"You rogue in grain! Can't you play your pranks upon your equals, instead of making that respectable man there a butt for your wanton freaks? Don't you know that it is said in the last commandment that 'thou shalt not covet any thing that is thy neighbour's?' Only wait a bit, and I'll reward you as you deserve. I'll have you hung upon the gallows before every body, to serve as an example for all mischievous imps and thieves!"

And then he called the hangman, and delivered the little boy to him, and bid him lead him at once to the gallows, and hang him up.

The hangman then seized him and bound a cord round his body, and took him away with him. And the judge accompanied them, to see if the hangman did his duty; and the monk went too, in order to exhort him on the way, and to help him to pray at the foot of the gallows. And a great crowd of men and women followed, in order to see how the poor little fiddler would be hanged.

But when the monk wanted to speak comfort to him, little Freddy only answered,—

"Now pray let me alone, reverend sir! I know that I have deserved my fate. It's true that I meant no great harm; I like to see people dancing right merrily, and I did not think it was such a great sin to take pleasure in it. And I thought that if you could eat meat in Lent, though it is forbidden, that you might very well dance for once in a way."

Meanwhile they had reached the gallows. The people placed themselves round it in a large circle. The ladder was then brought, and the hangman took the cord off poor little Freddy's body, and bound it round his neck, and then mounted a couple of staves of the ladder, and said to him,—

"Come, get up after me, my son!"

And little Freddy climbed up a couple of staves of the long ladder after him. But now he thought it high time to make his

first request to the judge, or it might be too late if he waited till he were a couple of staves higher. He therefore turned to the judge, and said,—

“ Ah, Mr. Judge, I have a great favour to ask you before I get up to the top there, and one that you surely might grant me !”

“ It shall not be refused, my son, if I have power to grant it,” answered the judge.

“ Well, then,” said little Freddy, “ I am so fond of my fiddle, that I don’t like to part with it before I have fiddled a last tune upon it. Therefore, allow me to amuse myself with it once more before my death, and to play something that will entertain both myself and you.”

But the monk then turned to the judge, and said, “ Mr. Judge, do not allow him to do so. It will be the death of us all if he begins fiddling.”

But the judge answered : “ One must not refuse a poor fellow a reasonable request, when he is on the steps of the gallows.”

He therefore turned to constable Holdfast, and ordered him to fetch the little boy’s fiddle. And Freddy received it joyfully, and began to draw the bow over the strings. Then the children all around began to dance. And little Freddy fiddled away more vigorously than ever.

Then the hangman said : “ I must have a dance ; I can’t hold it any longer !”

And down he got, and began dancing under the gallows.

And after the judge had looked on for awhile, and perceived that even Holdfast, the constable, had placed little Freddy’s fowling-piece against the ladder, in order to be better able to dance, and all around were dancing, he exclaimed : “ Since all are dancing, why should I alone stand still ?” And he began to dance with the rest.

And when the monk saw that, he exclaimed : “ And I, too, must enjoy the dance !” And he danced about with the crowd. But he was soon tired, because he was so stout. He therefore called out to the judge : “ For God’s sake, dear Mr. Judge, do have him stopped ! It is quite a shame for us to be dancing about before all these people. Didn’t I warn you ? I knew very well how it would be.”

But the judge, who had grown quite frolicsome during the dance, only answered, as he capered along, “ Dance away, reverend father, dance away ! I have no mind to stop yet ; the tune is too merry for that.”

"Yes," said little Freddy; "and now mind, I am going to play you a jig. You know that, reverend father, don't you? it is a merry tune, isn't it?" And he began to play anew.

And the surrounding crowd, together with the constable and the judge, and the women and the children, all began to dance indiscriminately with each other, so that there was a regular hub-bub, both under the gallows and all round them; and they all capered about, and many cried out, "Hurrah! It was never so merry at any body's hanging before!"

But little Freddy now came down from his ladder, still fiddling as he went, and, taking his fowling-piece under his arm, he ran fiddling through the dancing crowd, and made off as quick as he could. But the people all danced after him, and danced away till they had fairly danced themselves tired, and fell to the ground on the road-side. The fat monk was the first to fall down, panting, for he had danced his very breath away; then the judge fell, then the hangman, and then Holdfast, the constable; and now a couple fell here, and another couple there. And Freddy ran on, still fiddling away, until they had all dropped down exhausted.

And when he saw them all lying on the ground, little Freddy laughed heartily in his sleeve to think that he had saved himself from the gallows through his fiddle; and he wandered on to other districts and other towns, and gained a deal of money by his fiddle, and played so many pranks, that nothing was talked of but little Freddy and his fiddle. And so he lived on merrily for many years, till he grew a little old man.

When he died, all the strings of his fiddle snapped asunder. Many tried to play upon it by putting new strings to it; but whoever had not learnt to fiddle could not fiddle upon it any more than upon any other fiddle. And if a dance was played upon it, nobody was obliged to dance to it except those who happened just then to have a mind to dance. In short, it had become a fiddle just like any other fiddle.





TRADITIONAL BALLADS.—EDITED BY FELIX SUMMERLY.

VALENTINE AND URSINE.—PART II.

In high renown with prince and peer,
Now liv'd sir Valentine;
His high renown with prince and peer
Made envious hearts repine.

It chanc'd the king upon a day
Prepar'd a sumptuous feast:
And there came lords, and dainty dames,
And many a noble guest.

Amid their cups, that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful knight tax'd Valentine,
With base and doubtful birth.

The foul reproach, so grossly urg'd,
His generous heart did wound;
And strait he vow'd he ne'er would rest
Till he his parents found.

Then bidding king and peers adieu,
Early one summer's day,
With faithful Ursine by his side,
From court he took his way.

O'er hill and valley, moss and moor,
For many a day they pass;
At length, upon a moated lake,
They found a bridge of brass.

Beyond it rose a castle fair,
Y-built of marble stone:
The battlements were gilt with gold,
And glittered in the sun.

Beneath the bridge, with strange device,
A hundred bells were hung;
That man nor beast might pass thereon,
But strait their larum rung.

This quickly found the youthful pair,
Who boldly crossing o'er,
The jangling sound bedeaf't their ears,
And rung from shore to shore.

Quick at the sound the castle gates
Unlock'd and opened wide,
And strait a giant huge and grim
Stalk'd forth with stately pride.

“Now yield you, caitiffs, to my will;”
He cried with hideous roar;
“Or else the wolves shall eat your flesh,
And ravens drink your gore.”

“Vain boaster,” said the youthful knight,
“I scorn thy threats and thee:
I trust to force thy brazen gates,
And set thy captives free.”

Then putting spurs unto his steed,
He aim'd a dreadful thrust;
The spear against the giant glanc'd,
And caus'd the blood to burst.

Mad and outrageous with the pain,
He whirl'd his mace of steel;
The very wind of such a blow
Had made the champion reel.

It haply missed; and now the knight
His glittering sword display'd;
And riding round with whirlwind speed
Oft made him feel the blade.

As when a large and monstrous oak
Unceasing axes hew:
So fast around the giant's limbs
The blows quick-darting flew.

As when the boughs with hideous fall
Some hapless woodman crush:
With such a force the enormous foe
Did on the champion rush.

A fearful blow, alas! there came,
Both horse and knight it took,
And laid them senseless in the dust;
So fatal was the stroke.

Then smiling forth a hideous grin,
The giant strides in haste,
And, stooping, aims a second stroke;
"Now caytiff breathe thy last!"

But ere it fell, two thundering blows
Upon his scull descend:
From Ursine's knotty club they came,
Who ran to save his friend.

Down sank the giant, gaping wide,
And rolling his grim eyes:
The hairy youth repeats his blows:
He gasps,—he groans,—he dies.

Quickly sir Valentine reviv'd
With Ursine's timely care:
And now to search the castle walls
The venturous youths repair.

The blood and bones of murder'd knights
They found where'er they came;
At length within a lonely cell
They saw a mournful dame.

Her gentle eyes were dim'd with tears;
Her cheeks were pale with woe:
And long sir Valentine besought
Her doleful tale to know.

"Alas! young knight," she weeping said,
"Condole my wretched fate;
A childless mother here you see;
A wife without a mate.

"These twenty winters here forlorn,
I've drawn my hated breath;
Sole witness of a monster's crimes,
And wishing aye for death.

"Know, I am sister of a king,
And in my early years
Was married to a mighty prince,
The fairest of his peers.

"With him I sweetly liv'd in love
A twelvemonth and a day:
When lo! a foul and treacherous priest
Y-wrought our love's decay.

"His seeming goodness won him pow'r;
He had his master's ear:
And long to me and all the world
He did a saint appear.

"One day, when we were all alone,
He proffered odious love:
The wretch with horror I repuls'd,
And from my presence drove.

"He feign'd remorse, and piteous begg'd
His crime I'd not reveal:
Which, for his seeming penitence,
I promis'd to conceal.

"With treason, villany, and wrong,
My goodness he repaid:
With jealous doubts he fill'd my lord,
And me to woe betray'd.

"He hid a slave within my bed,
Then rais'd a bitter cry.
My lord, possest with rage, condemn'd
Me, all unheard, to die.

"A mother I was like to be,
And so my life he spar'd:
But bad me instant quit the realm,
One trusty knight my guard.

"Forth on my journey I depart,
Oppress'd with grief and woe;
And tow'rds my brother's distant court,
With breaking heart I go.

"Long time thro' sundry foreign lands
We slowly paced all day:
At length, within a forest wild,
I fainted quite away.

“And while the knight for succour sought,
And left me there forlorn,
Before he did return again
Two lovely boys were born.

“The eldest fair, and smooth, as snow
That tips the mountain hoar :
The younger’s little body rough
With hairs was cover’d o’er.

“But here afresh begin my woes :
While tender care I took
To shield my eldest from the cold,
And wrap him in my cloak,

“A prowling bear burst from the wood,
And seiz’d my younger son ;
Affection lent my weakness wings,
And after them I run.

“But all forewearied, weak, and spent,
I quickly swooned away :
And there beneath the greenwood shade
Long time I lifeless lay.

“At length the knight brought me relief,
And rais’d me from the ground :
But neither of my pretty babes
Could ever more be found.

“And while in search we wander’d far,
We met that giant grim ;
Who ruthless slew my trusty knight,
And bare me off with him.

“But charm’d by heav’n, or else my
He offer’d me no wrong ; [grieves
Save that within these lonely walls
I’ve been immur’d so long.”

“Now, surely,” said the youthful knight,
“You are lady Bellisance,
Wife to the Grecian Emperor :
Your brother’s king of France.

“For in your royal brother’s court
Myself my breeding had ;
Where oft the story of your woes
Hath made my bosom sad.

“If so, know, your accuser’s dead,
And dying own’d his crime ;
And long your lord hath sought you out,
Thro’ every foreign clime.

To them sir Ursine did succeed,
And long the sceptre bare,
Sir Valentine he stay’d in France,
And was his uncle’s heir.

“And when no tidings he could learn
Of his much-wronged wife ;
He vow’d thenceforth within his court
To lead a hermit’s life.”

“Now heaven is kind ;” the lady said ;
And dropt a joyful tear :
“Shall I once more behold my lord ?
That lord I love so dear ?”

“But madam,” said sir Valentine,
And knelt upon his knee : [babes
“Know you the cloak that wrapt your
If you the same should see ?”

And pulling forth the cloak of gold,
In which himself was found ;
The lady gave a sudden shriek,
And fainted on the ground.

But by his pious care reviv’d,
His tale she heard anon ;
And soon by other tokens found,
He was indeed her son.

“But who’s this hairy youth ?” she said :
“He much resembles thee :
The bear devour’d my younger son,
Or sure that son were he.”

“Madam, this youth with bears was bred,
And rear’d within their den.
But recollect ye any mark
To know your son again ?”

“Upon his little side,” quoth she,
“Was stamp’t a bloody rose.”
“Here, lady, see the crimson mark
Upon his body grows !”

Then clasping both her newfound sons
She bath’d their cheeks with tears :
And soon towards her brother’s court
Her joyful course she steers.

What pen can paint king Pepin’s joy,
His sister then restor’d !
And soon a messenger was sent
To cheer her drooping lord.

Who came in haste with all his peers,
To fetch her home to Greece ;
Where many happy years they reign’d,
In perfect love and peace.



TO THE SWALLOW.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

THE gorse is yellow on the heath, [gay,
The banks with speedwell flow'rs are
The oaks are budding; and beneath
The hawthorn soon will bear the wreath,
The silver wreath of May.

The welcome guest of settled spring,
The swallow, too, is come at last;
Just at sunset, when thrushes sing,
I saw her dash with rapid wing,
And hail'd her as she pass'd.

Come, summer visitant—attach
To my reed roof your nest of clay,
And let my ear your music catch,
Low twitt'ring underneath my thatch,
At the gray dawn of day.

As fables tell, an Indian sage,
The Hindustani woods among,
Could, in his desert hermitage,
As if 'twere mark'd in written page,
Translate the wild birds' song.

I wish I did his pow'r possess,
I then would learn, fleet bird, from
All our vain systems only guess, [thee,
And know from what wide wilderness
You come across the sea.

I would a little while restrain
Your rapid flight, that I might hear,
Whether, on clouds that bring the rain,
You sail across the Western main,
The wind your charioteer?—

Do Afric's plain, where every gale
Bears odours from the palmy grove,
Hear the loud cuckoo's frequent tale?
There did you meet the vagrant rail?
Or the low murmur'ring dove?

Were you in Asia? O relate,
If there your fabled sister's woes
She seem'd incessant to narrate;
Or sang she but to celebrate
Her nuptials with the rose?

I would inquire, how, journ'ying long
The wide and stormy ocean o'er,
You ply again those pinions strong,
And come anew, to build among
The scenes you left before.

But if, when colder breezes blow,
Prophetic of the waning year,
You hide, though none know when or
In some tall cliff's excavèd brow, [how,
And linger torpid here;

What wondrous instinct bids you know
Approaching dearth of insect food?
If to the will'wy aits you go,
And, crowding on the pliant bough,
Sink in the dimpled flood;

How there, while cold waves eddy
Your transitory tomb above, [flow
Learn ye when winds more mildly blow,
And the propitious moment know,
To rise to life and love?



THE THREE SUNBEAMS.

BY R. H. HORNE.

I SHALL not always speak of things in their actual and substantial forms and facts, but sometimes as they appeared to a Child's imagination and feelings. These visions are realities of the mind in the beautiful dawn of life; they are the facts of childhood, whose day-dreams are at once its poetry and its science. Nature is then a lovely romance; its commonest objects, if they are pure to the heart, are often wonders and delights: for the eye of a happy child

is always seeing miracles. Such visions are like water to the roots, and dews to the buds, of the human plant ; and as these waters and these dews are sweet and profuse, and the plant is open to the genial influence of the sun and air, so groweth the fair creature to a full and bright maturity. Listen, therefore, young friends, to the history of a day ; its varied impressions were never erased from the memory.

A happy Child awoke one morning at day-break, and heard the birds singing in the trees near her window. The Child arose, and went out into the garden, and as the path lay beneath her mother's bedroom, she stood still and looked up. The blinds were closely drawn, and she held her breath for fear of disturbing the silent house that seemed so sound asleep. She prayed in the fulness of her heart for all sorts of blessings upon that dear bed ; and as she prayed, she fancied that two beautiful large angels came half-way through the white frame-work of the bed's head, and bent over her mother's pillow, though without waking her.

More birds now began to sing as the day grew lighter. An orange gleam was in the eastern sky, low down, with streaks of pale rose-colour above it ; and the rosy streaks got redder and redder as the Child looked at them, while the orange gleam beneath became brighter and brighter. High up in the sky, opposite to those deepening lines, yet at a great distance, there was a kind of broken oval shape of pale dull silver (it never could be the moon that was so bright last night), with a slight shade of misty blue upon one side of it ; and this broken oval shape was gradually receding deeper into some dusky grey clouds that opened to receive it.

Round the garden walked the Child, thinking what a wonderful day of joy this would be to her elder sister, who would be seventeen next May — eight whole years older than herself ! — and who was now to be married to her old playmate, Willy, who was nineteen on his last birthday. At this moment, a goldfinch very handsomely dressed, and a robin in a russet coat, perched on opposite twigs, each on a topmost twig. Both began to sing together in the most joyous manner. They knew very well what the Child was thinking about, for the goldfinch ruffled his wings and topknot, and all the crimson feathers about his hot little face, in a smart, funny manner, to make a fuss as she passed ; and the robin gave a large, full stare with one of his round, black eyes — then a quick bob, that looked like a wink — and flew away. Both of these little fellows were wedding guests.

A rivulet formed the boundary of one side of the garden. Over this rivulet a plank was laid for a bridge, which the Child crossed, and slowly wandered along the path beside the hedge. She stopped to look at a bud of the wild convolvulus. Its white head was just opening. The sun was now rising above the roof of the house, and its light had darted over the further end of the garden; but the hawthorn hedge was still between, and every thing lay in shadow on this side of it. Presently the sun had got as high as the very highest of the great elm-trees, and then down came a broad beam, all in a bright shower over the hedge, and far across the fields. The convolvulus had opened its bud, and a delicate white trumpet hung trembling in the golden splendour! It was the first and only blossom the convolvulus had as yet put forth: all the other buds were some days younger, and were still closely packed up and sleeping in their dusky green sheaths.

“Sweet flower!” said the Child; “welcome to the first Sunbeam of day,—thy birthday; and may all thy mornings be as bright as this.”

The Child stood gazing silently on the convolvulus. “How much older I am,” thought she, “than this flower! It is younger even than little baby-cousin Florence, who cannot yet walk alone.” But as she thought of her little cousin, she all at once recollected that yesterday the news had arrived that Florence had begun to talk; and without further reflection she hastened along by the hedge, and across the clover-field, and so through the old orchard up to the house of her dear pretty aunt Ellen, whose sweet face everybody loved, and who was the mother of Florence.

This pretty aunt Ellen, as she was often called by several children besides the one little girl in white who now came and tapped so softly at her bedroom door, was still in bed, partly because it was yet very early, and partly because she had been in very delicate health for some time; indeed ever since the birth of little Florence. Had all those young eyes which gazed upon her soft ethereal face, her transparent complexion, with the rose-blush tint in the middle of her cheek,—could those young eyes have seen the cause of this unearthly loveliness, and have known her state of fast-declining health, there would have been other epithets bestowed upon her besides pretty aunt Ellen, other emotions far less joyful in gazing upon her.

Now as for this baby-cousin Florence, it was the most wonderful baby ever heard of, and talked as no other baby was ever known

to do at this age. She could not only ask for every thing she wanted—if not by word, yet by signs and noises, and several charming and intelligent crows and squeals—but she had yesterday called attention to some creatures in the field, and in words that actually made a rhyme,—*Moo tow tum nooky maa, an teep tay baa*,” which, being translated, meant,—“Moo cow come to look at mamma, and sheep say baa.” A traveller, a man of great learning,—just returned from the Society Islands in the South Pacific Ocean,—had assured them that this baby-language bore an extraordinary resemblance in sound and accent to that of the natives of those uncivilised, yet peaceful, islands ; and playfellow Willy had declared that he had read some words very like them, indeed, in Captain Cook’s “Voyages.”

The Child played in the orchard with this wonderful baby-cousin and its little nurse several hours. Its dear mamma could not get up to-day, though she smiled so sweetly at the Child, and kissed her so tenderly when she came back from the orchard to take leave and return home.

Down stairs ran the Child, and out at the door, and through the orchard again, and away across the fields. She must not be too late for her sister’s wedding. It was nearly noon as she ran along by the hedge, and approached the convolvulus. There was one dark cloud in the heavens, and behind this the sun was steadily burning, and shewing his dazzling face only now and then—and, indeed, only a small part of his face.

But as she arrived opposite to the convolvulus, forth came the sun, and a broad and steady beam fell upon the flower and upon the Child’s golden locks at the same time. She stopped before the luminous white blossom, now with its beautiful trumpet-mouth expanded to the utmost, and seeming to drink in the sun’s rays, when suddenly there burst out of the bright clouds, and not very far distant in the sky, a sweet peal of church bells ! “One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight !” cried the Child, as fast as the bells ; and off she ran in the direction of the village church, singing aloud with the merry peal of the bells as she skipped along.

The wedding train are on the way : there they move, onwards between the trees ! Now they float across the green level above the meadow, singing ; all the young girls of the village dressed in white, with wreaths and garlands of white roses. Some are nearly sixteen years old ! Emmy, the bride, is *more* than sixteen ! Onward they move : and all that train of white angels is now fast gathering together at the churchyard gate.

Behind all these snow-white maidens slowly move fathers and mothers, and old figures of grandsires and grandames, and some very old figures indeed, looking like the parents of every one there. In front of all that crowd of angels stands the old village church, with birds'-nests in the ivy walls, and in the arched windows, and in the little old grey spire. The gravestones are so aged that they have lost all shape, and are half covered with dry spots of grey and reddish moss, and some of them are quite covered with thick green moss, and sinking backwards or sideways, or bent down forwards, like the oldest of the great-grandfathers in the marriage train, and seeming as if bowing down into the earth, to be at rest beneath the grass. The peal of bells ceases ; and the peal and roll of the organ rises up into heaven with the angels' voices.

Do the hours fly, or do they stand still ? The present is so delicious, why should it become the future ?

If the hours have not gone on, the sun certainly has. From that high place where he was shining a little while ago—or, surely, not very long since—he has now descended, while nobody observed ; and is, indeed, below the large lower boughs of the elm-trees : he



is fast gliding down. The Child thought of the convolvulus, which she had twice before noticed to-day, so she ran off to see how it looked in the beam of the setting sun.

The convolvulus was most lovely beneath the glorious sky, with

golden fire below and purple and crimson streaks above. The declining sunbeam swept across the rivulet and garden, and over the meadows and churchyard, with the bright old church ; and across the field and farmyard, beyond the stile ; over the upland pastures beyond the farm, and then streaming across the climbing wood that skirted the upland, fell upon the soft range of hills above, and melted into the softer clouds of the distance. The Child stood awhile observing this with silent rapture, and then ran back to join the happy crowd of wedding guests and fairy-like friends.

Here we stand in the sun while the birds are singing round us among the trees, and we inhale the sweet scents of the garden, and white angels are dancing between the trees. Off they drop—one by one, and two by two. Those who dance, must also sleep. The garden is now all in soft shade ; but what of that ? Is not the shade also beautiful ? Why should these pleasures have any change ? and why should we leave the garden because the dancers have left the lawn—except to go to bed ? Life must end at some time—so they say. The shade is darker in the garden. Oh, happy bed, with dreams, or without a dream, but with a Morning certain to come !

Yes, a change of some kind has happened. That same night, after all were in bed, a loud ringing was heard at the gate ! And hasty footsteps moved along the garden paths,—and in the passage below,—and upstairs to the bed-room,—and down again,—and the words “Poor, dear Ellen !” were heard by more than one of the listeners in bed.

Has any sad thing happened to dear, pretty aunt Ellen, who looked so thoughtful and was so full of tenderness this morning ! What can it be ? Something in black goes by ! Who taps at the door ? Here we are—all children—all at rest, or soon to be so ; we only wait to say our prayers, and then we hope to sleep in God’s arms !

Early next morning the Child got up, and went into the garden. She felt not so happy as yesterday—indeed, not half so happy. Her heart seemed to have become heavy in her breast. But there was no cause for this ! She thought she would go straightway to see how the beautiful convolvulus-flower looked.

When she arrived at the place, it was gone ! It had fallen off. Could this shrivelled, closed-up, damp, dingy thing, lying upon the earth beneath, be really the flower she had seen there yesterday, all covered with sunbeams ? Impossible ! Yet, perhaps, it may be the sad remains of it. Yes, it must, indeed, be so. This, then, is death ? It *is* death. And now the Child saw what had

happened to her dear mamma's dear sister Ellen, the mother of her baby-cousin Florence. And the Child burst into a passion of tears, crying aloud, "Oh, miserable Child, there is Death come among us!"

The Child ceased her lamentations, for a strange whispering of leaves behind the convolvulus made her stop to listen with some alarm; and a Voice, thrilling with sweetness, and a something unknown, spoke from the leaves, and said,—

"Weep not, Child, for the flower that liveth but a day, and waste no sorrow upon the beauty to which there cometh no second morning upon earth.

"It hath had the full enjoyment of its nature, and should pass away softly to make room that another may enjoy the same.

"There are three great things in this world; and there is none other like unto them.

"The first is Birth, which is the breath of life, and hath feeling and thought for its inheritance. The last is Death, which giveth rest and sleep, and is the means of change to another state—the dark but secure bridge, that leadeth onward to heaven.

"Thus are Birth and Death the beginning and the end of things—with Love in the midst of all.

"There is nothing else so good and wise as universal Love; and it is the only universal happiness for all living creatures of earth, of air, and of the waters.

"Oh, happy Child! enjoy the loving space of thy mortal time; give all the love thou hast to all around thee; so shalt thou prolong the pleasantness of thy days, and cover with sunbeams thy morning, noon, and evening, until Death, crowned with stars, shall descend upon thee."



THE MONTH OF MAY.

BY MARY ROBERTS.

MERRILY do the villagers sally forth on the first of May: the young hurry along as if their lives depended on gathering the first branches, while the older, and those who have seen somewhat of life's changes, rejoice in the beauty and fragrance of the blossoms, and listen to the harmony of birds praising their Maker "after their kind."

It is a gladdening sight to witness groups of people going forth in their best attire, with merry children, to the wood-side, there to gather branches of may, and sweet herbs and flowers. The strong men seek out a tall tree, and that most clear of branches. Then is heard the woodcutter's hatchet, waking up the echoes both far and near; and then the crashing sound, when the noble head sinks suddenly from among the topmost branches of surrounding trees, and comes with a thundering fall to the ground. Low it lies with its leafy honours, but not destined to lie long, for it is soon fixed to a team of oxen, the numbers of which betoken the liberality of the neighbouring farmers; for twenty, and even thirty, are not unfrequently yoked for the purpose, each one having a nosegay tied to his horns. He who looks at the procession as it emerges from some good greenwood, sees a sight of exceeding beauty; he might almost fancy that a train of flowers was being carried in large baskets, so profusely are the horns of the ponderous oxen wreathed with the lovely productions of the spring. Next comes the tree, crashing beneath its weight. It is covered with herbs and flowers which busy hands have bound around, except at intervals, where the bright colours with which the trunk is painted serve to throw out the delicate tints of the flowers. The branches too are decorated in like manner, and behind it follows a great crowd, most of whom carry flowers in their hands, or large branches of may; and young children have their posies of cuckoo-pints or cowslips. The tree, thus gaily attired, is soon raised up, with streamers at the top; beneath it the ground is strewed with flowers and green branches, and old and young dance around it in their natural pouring forth of joy at the blessing of returning spring.



THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

THERE are few subjects more worthy of admiration than the various instincts by which the different classes of birds are governed, and the manner in which Nature has fitted them for the modes of life they are destined to follow. Many of them contribute to the sustenance or convenience of man by their flesh and feathers, and by the instinct which directs them, for their own support, to destroy great numbers of those insects, which would otherwise be

injurious to him ; while his pleasure is promoted by the beauty of their forms, and the cheering sounds of their voices. "The music of the groves" has always been named among the most pleasing circumstances that attend the renewal of vegetative life. And even the dark and gloomy days of winter are not without sounds, that afford a sort of melancholy pleasure. The evening owl, and the rooks that in a calm morning clamour high in the air, in their flight toward distant downs and wild heaths, where in mild weather the worms work up on the surface, contribute to the satisfaction of the pensive observer. So felt that admirable poet, to whom I am always disposed to refer for forcible and exquisite description,—

" And cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles, screaming loud ;
The jay, the pie, and e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me."

In, or rather before, very severe weather, vast flocks of wild waterfowl pass overhead in their way from the North to places where, from the shelter of woods and hills, or the rapidity of the streams, the frost does not deprive them of their food. These, particularly wild geese, fly so high in the air, that they are often heard without being seen. Nearer the sea, the birds peculiar to the rocks and sands scream round the cliffs, or wheel over the expanse of water ; and are not less in harmony with the scene than the thrush, the woodlark, and the nightingale, with the tender green and reviving beauty of spring.

Natural history is a study, that, wherever you are placed, will afford you a source of amusement ; but it is yet of greater consequence, as being often of great utility in the conduct of life. The philosopher and the poet should both be naturalists. Homer, whose poems are read with such delight, under all the disadvantages of a translation into a less perfectly sonorous language, was well versed in natural history ; and his similes, generally so well chosen and well painted, relieve, and illustrate, the principal actions of his two poems. My present purpose shall be to give a general view of the six orders of birds, though I shall not dwell on the description of any that have not something remarkable in their history, or that are not natives of this country or of Europe. I shall then add what mythological story tells of them ; and afterward touch on their appearance in fables, where their qualities or attributes are often mingled with the passions and affections of human beings.

THE WOODRANGER'S SON.

By Berthold Auerbach. Translated by Meta Taylor.

I.—LITTLE EBERHARD AND HIS DOG.

“ In the depths of the dark and silent wood
 The ranger's lonely cottage stood :
 No sound by day but the rustling trees,
 No sound by night but the whistling breeze,
 And the wild bird's screaming note.”

THIS old verse recurs to my mind as I sit down to relate a passage in the life of little Eberhard. And the story itself?—ay, indeed, in recalling it I seem to be listening to one of those old songs, wafted to my ear with a mournful, long-drawn melody, such as one often hears in a lonely valley. But the stone cross stands there still, although half-buried in the ground, and the wild roses twine about the mossy stone. Listen, then.

There stands the ranger's house, silent and lonely as the song describes it. A spaniel is lying in the sunshine, with his eyes half shut, as if asleep ; but every now and then he snaps at a fly, which is bold enough to dance upon his nose : if he catches it, the poor thing is swallowed down in an instant, but if it escapes he only shakes his ears contemptuously, and composes himself again quietly to rest. It is easy to see in Nimrod's face (for so the dog is called) how much he looks down on such a fly-chase as beneath his dignity, but it is now nearly two months since he followed any other game ; the last shot he heard had struck his master, whose loss is mourned by a widowed mother and her only son Eberhard. The dog cannot weep, he can only mourn in silence ; and he has fallen away, as if tormented by a bad conscience. To tell the truth, poor Nimrod was not altogether free from fault,—but this will all be disclosed in due time.

Nimrod gets up, stretches himself, draws a long face, as if weary of life, and then walks slowly to the hedge, and stands there watching little Eberhard, who, seated on the ground, is busy cutting and peeling some twigs of a linden-tree.

Eberhard was a boy scarcely nine years of age : his whole dress consisted of a shirt and a pair of carefully patched trousers. His blond hair, uncut, fell upon his shoulders, and his clear blue eyes peeped out from under the arched brows ; whilst his plump and rosy cheeks betokened a childish absence of care, and his bare, sun-burnt chest showed how he was used to sport about in the open air.

At the moment of which we are now speaking Eberhard was

sitting on a hedge-bank, and with compressed lips was teaching his little pipe the notes which he should afterwards play upon it. The dog stood before him, looking on.



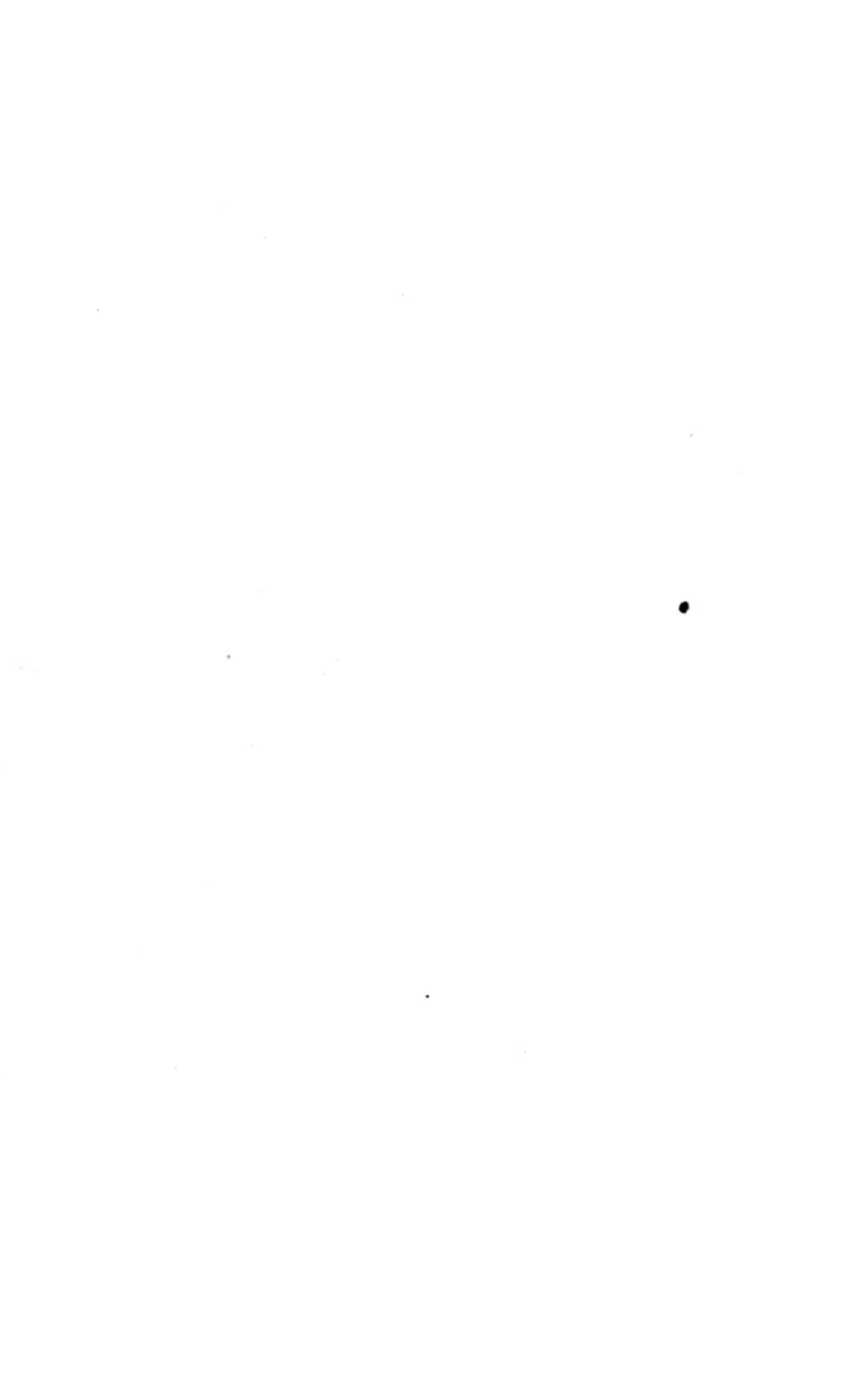
“Ah, Nimrod!” said the boy; “and you too would like to have a pipe, eh? O, you poor beast! you can do nothing but howl and bark, whilst I can sing and whistle: you’ll see, only wait till I’ve done.” And then he added to himself, in an under tone, “Ay, and if the birds sing in the trees, the little twigs have also tunes shut up in them; and if one only knows how to set about it, out they come. The boughs on the trees are nothing more than unmade whistles. Now, if one could but get the bark off a tree whole, there would be a pipe indeed! ’t would be heard as far as the church clock: but what a mouth one must have to hold it!”

Eberhard laughed to himself at the thought of the huge mouth, with the whole bark of a linden-tree stuck in it. But the dog fancied that the laugh was meant for him; he could scarcely have understood a person’s laughing to himself at his own thoughts. He rubbed his sides against Eberhard’s legs, in return for his kindness, but the boy said,—“There, there, lie down! I’ve no time to play with you now, I have work to do.”

Little Eberhard was rather too hasty about his work, which required care: he tapped the wood with the handle of his knife, and loosened the bark around the twigs, but still it broke continually, as he drew it hastily off: he had yet to learn that he could only cut those parts of the twigs which had no knots. This he now found out, and as he took up the last twig he exclaimed, “Well, you must and shall do,—wait a moment!”

On a sudden a shrill whistle was heard, proceeding from the forest: the dog jumped up, and pricked up his ears. The whistle





was repeated, and in an instant the dog was off like a shot. Eberhard ran after him, whistling and crying,—“ Nimrod ! come back, Nimrod ! ” But the dog heeded him not—he was already far out of sight and hearing. Still Eberhard continued running further and further into the forest, as if some one were pursuing him. At length he stopped, for he thought that the dog would be sure to return home by himself. “ He is a faithful beast,” said Eberhard ; “ though, to be sure, ‘t is not very faithful of him to run away thus.”

Eberhard’s mother had forbidden him to go alone into the forest, and he had promised to mind what she said. “ But now,” thought he, “ I’m here against my own will ; I only wanted to bring Nimrod home, and I cannot therefore have disobeyed my mother’s orders. And, surely, now that I *am* here there can be no harm in my running about and having a little fun.”

So easy is it to invent excuses for any wrong thing we have a wish to do, although we do not really believe the excuses to be good, and in the background a little voice is heard which forbids the deed. But we too often act as Eberhard now did : he whistled and sang, that he might not hear the voice of conscience in his breast ; he climbed up one tree after another, as if to escape from his good angel, but still it followed him, entreating him to return home. Once, indeed, half persuaded, he got down a tree, and as he stood looking up through the green boughs into the blue sky, a squirrel ran up a beech-tree, seated itself on a high branch, cleaned its smooth fur, and peered merrily about. Eberhard snapped his finger at the squirrel, and thought to himself, “ I only wish I had you ! I am much worse off indeed than the birds or squirrels, for I can neither fly nor climb like them. Nimrod was right to run off into the forest ; he is master there, and we with our broad clumsy feet cannot follow him. I only wish that I had four feet—I’d jump then in another fashion.”

A mocking-bird, which was perched aloft on the top of a withered branch, seemed to mock at Eberhard’s strange fancies in all kinds of tunes ; for these birds have no note of their own, and only imitate those of other songsters. Eberhard was teased, and tried to frighten the bird away, by crying out and throwing stones at it ; but the bird would not stir, until it saw the boy climbing up to the top of the tree, then, whish ! off it flew to another tree, where it began its song again. But Eberhard found other birds which could not fly away : there was a blackbird’s nest, with young ones scarcely out of the egg. “ One, two, three, four, five,” counted



Eberhard ; "again an odd number ! In every bird's nest I have remarked this : it surely must have some meaning, if one only knew what. My mother was right when she put an odd number of eggs under the hen to hatch."

Had Eberhard paid more attention, and not been so hasty as to imagine a general rule from the few nests he had seen, he would have known that there is no mystery about the odd number of eggs, simply because it is not true : the swallow, the house- and wood-pigeon, sit upon two eggs only, and two is an even number all the world over. But indeed if we knew everything in youth there would be no occasion for us to grow old.

The young blackbirds, whose mother had perhaps not yet told them how many brothers and sisters they were, stretched out their yellow beaks to Eberhard, and looked at him with their big yellow-ringed eyes, as if in astonishment. It was all one to them how many they were, provided they had something to eat. Eberhard pulled a knife and a piece of string out of his pocket, and found at the bottom a few crumbs of bread ; these he chewed, and then fed the little birds : but all the thanks he got was a shake of the head, whilst they only ducked down to swallow the bread more easily. Eberhard saw that he could not yet take the nest without killing all the little birds, and a feeling of pity moved him as he thought of the mother returning home and finding her young ones gone : but he resolved to wait till the old bird came. Then again he thought of his own mother, and he grew quite hot with anxiety

when he recollects how long he had been away from home. One minute he resolved to leave the young birds to their mother, and only come from time to time to peep at them; but still he longed to take them. But might not some other boy perhaps find them, and rob the nest? However his kind feeling conquered, and he thought, if another boy could find it in his heart to be so cruel, he could not. "Bless you!" he said gently, bending close over the nest; and then climbing down, he cut three notches in the tree, that he might know it again. At length he went his way home-wards: but still he must go a little round-about way. Who knows but that he might find the dog?

II.—COUSIN GOTTFRIED.

READER, have you ever been quite alone at noonday in the depths of a pine-forest? The tall and slender stems, with their smooth bark, stand glistening in the broken sunshine, and giving out their resinous perfume: high above project their leafy crowns, and at their feet the little tendrils of the moss interlace each other closely, and form a soft covering to the ground. Yonder stands a solitary holly-bush, with its shining leaves; a little lizard, which had come out to sun itself in the moss, rustles deeper into its retreat at your approach. Leave the poor thing in peace; who knows for what purpose it was created?

As Eberhard pursued his way, a man suddenly stood before him, clad in green, and with his gun slung at his back. With a smile and in a friendly tone he addressed Eberhard: he was the owner of the forest, a rich peasant, who went by the name of "Cousin Gottfried" among the folks in the country round about; who were, in truth, just as nearly related to him as to the emperor of Russia.

"What brings you here?" asked Gottfried.

"My two legs," answered Eberhard, pointing to them, and thinking the while of his wish to have *four*.

"What are you looking for?"

"Oh, nothing in particular; only our dog has run away."

"Let him run to old Nick, the good-for-nothing beast! he has had too many masters, and is now quite muddle-pated. If ever I fall in with the creature, I'll shoot him as sure as he runs on four legs."

Eberhard seized Gottfried's hand, and begged so earnestly for the dog's life, that Gottfried at length promised to have patience with him. He did not let go the boy's hand, and they walked on for

awhile in silence, until they came to a little rising ground, on which stood some noble pine-trees: then Eberhard exclaimed,

“Cousin, what beautiful trees! they are as fine . . . as fine . . . as fine as a church; ay, indeed, and much finer still!”

“That’s right, my boy!” said Gottfried; “I’m glad to see you also like them. Look-ye, the trees yonder, from that holly-bush down to the ‘Shady Hollow,’ are my state-room, my drawing-room, in short, my delight: in the winter, when the sap leaves the trunk and the time comes to fell the trees, this clump here has been marked out four or five times to be cut down; but when it came to the point, and I looked at them, I’ve thought to myself—Why not let them stand? they are better where they are; and, indeed, they’re a glorious sight. There’s a good sum of money, to be sure, lying idle; but what of that? they are my pleasure, and that’s something; and it gladdens my very heart every time I pass this way to see them standing still alive and fresh and green.”

“Do trees, then, die?” asked Eberhard.

“Certainly,” answered Gottfried; “everything in this world must die. If the trees stand beyond their time, they become rotten at the core.”

“Cousin,” said Eberhard again, “you can tell me, I dare say, what becomes of all the millions and millions of birds that there are in the world: one hardly ever finds a dead bird.”

“In this you see,” replied Gottfried, “how pure and cleanly—I would say modest—Nature is in everything; whatever ceases to be of use, disappears of itself. Thus, when a bird feels that it is going to die (of which it is well enough aware) it creeps into some cave or secret place, where the hedgehogs, weasels, and such-like animals live, or into a cleft in a rock, or a hollow tree, where the ants, flies, and other insects find it; there the bird lays itself patiently down, puts its head under its wing, and waits until its heart ceases to beat, and life is gone; and scarcely have two days passed when the ants and insects have eaten it up, and nothing remains but the feathers, which are carried away by the wind, or the young birds take them and line their nests. Everything is well ordered in the world. The birds, all their life long, live upon ants’ eggs, flies, and the like, and at last are themselves the food of those insects. I am not sure whether it is exactly as I say, but it appears so to me, and there is something sacred in the manner in which these little creatures instinctively retire from man’s sight to die.”

Eberhard was delighted with all that Gottfried told him, and



he sighed to think how little his mother knew of life in the forest, and that he had no one whom he could ask about these things, now that his father was dead.

“Cousin,” said Eberhard, “do you know why waggons have four wheels?”

“There are also carts with two wheels,” answered Gottfried.

"Yes, I know that," rejoined Eberhard; "but there are many more four-wheeled waggons, and they are much better; the two-wheeled ones are just like a man with his two feet, easily upset."

"Ay, if he does not keep his balance!" said Gottfried, with a smile; and Eberhard continued:—

"I think men must have copied the four-wheeled waggons from swift-footed animals. Birds have only two feet, because they are not intended for walking but for flying, and everything that is obliged to remain on the ground has four feet: is it not so?"

"Yes; but the waggons?"

"Why they are like an animal. When my dog is jumping about, he seems just like a waggon; his head is the axletree, and his body is the body of the waggon, and so he moves swiftly and turns about easily; and I cannot help thinking that men have learnt from this how to make waggons."

Gottfried nodded, as much as to say that the boy was right; and Eberhard, delighted to find so ready a listener, went on prattling away about all kinds of things, just whatever came into his head. At this moment a goldfinch whistled in a bush hard by, and Eberhard exclaimed, "Cousin, do you think that the bird knows its own name?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why I think that we men have given the birds their names, but that they know nothing about it. Now I should like to find out how they call to one another—I should like to know why it is that a bird is straining its body and singing the whole day long."

"Why that indeed I can't tell you."

"We have only one name for so many birds," continued Eberhard; "swallow, lark, and so forth. Now I think if a blackbird has five children, that each of them must have a name of its own."

"The birds," replied Gottfried, smiling, "don't take their children to church to be baptized."

"And yet perhaps the birds may have names amongst themselves, and we know nothing of it."

"Yes, we know nothing about it, and that's all that can be said," replied Gottfried.

Eberhard had still a number of questions on his tongue's end, and Gottfried liked to chat with the boy, for he was very fond of him. But he now reminded him of returning home, and pointed out the path through the wooded defile called the "Shady Hollow," as the nearest way. Off went Eberhard with a bounding step. How

different was everything in the "Hollow" to the open forest above! The brook made its way with difficulty among the rocks; Eberhard had a great wish to look for crawfish, but he resolved not to let anything stop him again. The air was chilly, notwithstanding the warmth and brightness of the noonday sun; huge masses of rock overhung the path on all sides, threatening to fall upon the passer-by. One huge rock, overgrown with moss, had been stopped as it was rolling down the steep by a young fir-tree, which fixed itself firmly against the rock, and rose straight upwards toward the sky. Hard by lay a tall uprooted pine, bare and withered; whilst here and there the stems of old trees hung down, bent with age, and their dark boughs tipped with fresh green shoots.

Eberhard had proceeded only a few steps when a dog barked; he at once recognised Nimrod: but why did not the dog come to him? Eberhard climbed up a rock, in order to look about and call to the animal, but the sound died away upon his lips. On the opposite side of the glen, stretched on a bank of ferns and moss, he



saw a rough-looking man, with black bushy hair and beard, and a fierce expression in his eye; at his side lay Nimrod, whom the man was evidently trying to attach to himself. As soon as the dog perceived Eberhard he bounded off to meet him; and yet, plainly as if expecting a reproachful look in his master's face, he crouched down at his feet, winced, and patiently awaited a beating. Eber-

hard however had no time for this, for in a minute the rough-looking man stood before him, and exclaimed with feigned ignorance and in a sharp tone, "Who are you?"

"I am the woodranger's son, Eberhard," answered the boy.

"And where is your father?"

"Dead,—he was shot in the forest."

"Who shot him?"

"That nobody knows: if we knew that——"

"Then you ought to kill the man who shot him, or you are no brave lad, no true forester's son."

"Yes indeed," replied the boy resolutely.

The man laughed aloud, and it seemed to Eberhard as if another person were laughing likewise down behind the rocks. A sudden feeling of fear and anxiety seized him; he began to weep aloud, and said with a faltering voice, "Give me back my dog, I must go home." Nimrod understood what was going on, and bounded joyfully up to Eberhard; but the rough man gave the poor dog a kick that sent him rolling down the hill-side, and he came limping up again and laid himself down at the man's feet. "Home, indeed!" said the man to Eberhard; "no, no, you come with me."

Escape was impossible, and as the only way of resisting, Eberhard threw himself on the ground, and would not stir from the spot. The stranger, seeing that he could not succeed by violent means, now tried what fair words would do, and said, "I will not hurt you, I promise; you shall only help me to get a nest, and then I'll give you something: what would you like to have?"

"Nothing—I want only to go home."

"But would'nt you like to have a little squirrel?"

"Yes indeed—but I must and will go home."

Eberhard stood half-angry, half-entreating; his hand was again clasped in another's, but the stranger's grasp was not like good Cousin Gottfried's. The boy yielded, and went with him, for he saw plainly that resistance was of no use; and moreover he hoped that, when they once got out of the Hollow, he should meet with help: Cousin Gottfried, he thought, could not be far off, or they would surely fall in with some one who would befriend him. But no person, alas! was to be seen, and the stranger grasped Eberhard's hand as tight as a vice.

III.—THE VULTURE'S NEST.

THE stranger struck into a pathless track ; and Eberhard, who had fancied that he knew every tree and bush far and wide, seemed, as he gazed around, to be in a new world. They soon came to a large rocky basin, which looked like the dried-up bed of some lake. The sun was already going down, and evening was approaching. Upon the wide open space were only a few scattered bushes. Here and there was heard the grasshopper's chirp ; the droning bees hummed past ; and the butterflies, like liberated flowers, flew gently through the air to their sisters, who remained bound to the earth. The tapping sound of the wood-pecker was heard in the forest, and the stone-thrush sang merrily among the rocks, as if rejoicing to find life pleasant even there. Eberhard in leaping from rock to rock often slipped and hurt his knees : the stranger therefore (was it from kindness, or another feeling ?) took the boy up in his arms, and sprang with him over the deep chasms without ever stumbling. At length they came to a long, narrow ledge of rock, and now they walked again hand-in-hand.

“Where is your father's gun ?” said the stranger.

“It hangs over the door at home, upon the stag's horns—the last stag my grandfather shot.”

“Your grandfather was a murderer,—the murderer of my father !” exclaimed the man, with a fierce look. Eberhard stared in amazement, as the other continued, “Why don't you sell the gun ? why don't you give it away ?”

“Old Klaus, the ranger, told my mother that she should leave the gun hanging where it was ; there is a bullet in it still—the last one my father rammed down ; and Klaus says, that if ever the murderer comes into our room, the gun will go off by itself and shoot him.”

Eberhard felt the stranger's hand tremble, as he held his breath and bit his lips until they bled : then with a forced laugh the man said,—“Stuff and nonsense ! do you suppose the fellow would be such a fool as to come into your room and place himself just before the muzzle of the gun, as much as to say, Now shoot me ?”

The man turned sharply round, as if he felt some one pulling him from behind. “What was that ?” he exclaimed fiercely, and yet half trembling : “what are you about ? why are you pulling me ?”

“I did nothing,” answered the boy ; “and indeed I could not pull you.” An indescribable dread came over Eberhard, and he

began to sing aloud the pious songs which his mother had taught him : he thought they would free him from the evil spirit which held him prisoner, and dispel the terror and anxiety he felt. At first the stranger, in a harsh voice, bade him be silent ; but Eberhard did not heed him, and as he went on singing more and more fervently, the man's rough hand gradually relaxed its grasp ; he sighed deeply, muttering to himself, and unable to check the boy, who sang as follows :—

“ Angels, that in heaven do dwell,
 Keep and guard us safe and well !
 Saints, that live with angels there,
 Keep us ever in your care.
 They do watch lest ill befall
 To us, body, soul and all.
 When we go about, or bide,
 When we walk or when we ride,
 When we sleep or when we wake,
 We their care and love partake.
 In all our ways, by day and night,
 God doth guard us with his might, Amen !

The stranger had involuntarily taken off his hat, and stood there with folded hands and downcast eyes. Then he looked at Eberhard, upon whose features the evening sun shone brightly : they were radiant, as with a reflexion of Heaven's glory, and it seemed to the boy as if he were taken up from earth, and heavenly forms were hovering about him as he sang,—

“ Tell me, angels, tell me where,
 Have you seen my father dear ?
 For he's now in heaven high,
 With the angels in the sky.”

They had now come to the end of the ledge of rock, where stood a slender birch-tree : Eberhard bent it down, as if it were a switch, and stepping along its stem over a chasm in the rocks he sang,—

“ Bend thee, tree ! and bend thee, bough !
 My child has no peace nor rest, I trow :
 Now bend you leaves ! and bend thee, grass !
 And let all ill and danger pass.”

The stranger looked at the boy ; he could almost fancy him some holy object, as he stepped thus securely over the frightful abyss : he seemed half inclined to let him go ; when suddenly the birch-tree flew back and struck the man in the face. This roused his passion : he sought for the plank, which he kept concealed in a cleft in the rock, and crossed over to the boy. Eberhard was

upon his knees, and stretching his clasped hands to heaven he was repeating a little prayer. "Hold your noise!" exclaimed the surly man; "I've had enough of that: what are you afraid of? I'll not hurt you, but you must go along with me."

"What for?" asked Eberhard.

"The rocks where we are now standing," replied the man, "are called the Cockscomb; you have seen them often enough from a distance; rarely indeed does any one come thus far. We are now within a few yards of the vulture's nest,—climb up the rock there, and bring me the young ones."

"What do you want them for?"

"The magistrates pay a reward for all the claws that are brought to them; and you too shall have a share."

"I'll not have any; why don't you take the nest yourself?"

"Because I cannot: a person would be lost if he were to attempt it alone; for when the old vulture comes, she would peck out his eyes to a certainty. I'll wait down here, with my gun, and watch; and if the bird makes a pounce, I'll settle him in a trice."

"But where is the dog?" asked the boy, without knowing exactly why.

"He has not followed us," replied the stranger sharply; "and moreover he couldn't help us. Quick now, and climb up! don't you hear what a noise the young ones are making? Off with you!"



Eberhard climbed almost involuntarily up to the shelf of rock above, whilst, the man remained below upon the watch.

Reader, have you ever closely observed a bird of prey balancing itself aloft? The lark, with its unwearied song, and the tuneless swallow, skim for their own pleasure through the ocean of air; their flight is no hurried fluttering from one resting-place on earth to another, but they are at home in the blue expanse of heaven. And, like the lark and the swallow, the bird of prey hovers and circles in its flight aloft. Why have we given it that reproachful name—bird of prey? The lark and the swallow snap up flies and worms; and the bird of prey obeys only the same instinct, when it seizes, with its strong talons and sharp beak, larger prey to support its life: and the lark and the bird of prey both do the will of their Creator.

Short-sighted beings that we are! Behold yon black speck in the sky, close to the horizon, fixed as if spell-bound by the sportsman's eye. It comes nearer; with outstretched wings it floats upon the light air. See now, how it sweeps round in a circle, as if without an effort! then, with a few strokes of its tail upon the air, it rises, and sinks, and again scarcely moves from the spot.

Eberhard reached the nest, and, in spite of his fear, he could not help feeling a kind of joyous amazement when he looked at the young birds: they were blind, and lay nestling their almost naked heads together, either from affright, or perhaps because they had something to say to one another which no human ear can understand. For a minute Eberhard stood looking compassionately at them, and thought, "How curious it is that dogs and vultures, which have the best eyes in the world, are both born blind!" The young birds however appeared to notice Eberhard's presence, for they tumbled about one over another, stretched out their red and yellow beaks as far as they could, and rolled over and over in the feathers of the various singing-birds that lined the nest.

"Throw me down the young ones!" cried the man, and instantly again fixed his eye intently upon the sky. Eberhard stretched out his hand to take the young birds, which seemed ready to fly at him: then he grew angry, and flung them down one after another—again there were *five*!

A rushing sound was suddenly heard in the air above. "Duck down, for your life!" cried a voice, and—bang!—the report of a gun followed, and a large dark wing sank down upon Eberhard: he could keep his hold no longer, and sliding down the rock he fell



senseless on the ground beside the dying young ones and the old dead vulture. The shot had been fired close above Eberhard's head.

The poacher—for so we must now call the strange man—fixed a dark and sinister look upon the boy, and then upon the vulture at his side. The sun was just sinking behind the mountain's brow, and the man's face glowed in the light! "The devil had a hand in that shot!" he exclaimed: "it would never have been so if I had wished it. Why the boy is charmed, and as if he had some unearthly spirit to protect him! Well then, let his guardian angel take him home—ha, ha!" The man laughed wildly, while

he yet trembled inwardly with dread: he lifted up the huge bird, with its expanded wings and bloody feathers; but at that instant seeing Eberhard stir, he hastened from the spot, and left the boy lying there beside the expiring young vultures.

In the night all the birds were startled from sleep in their nests, for a boy went singing through the wood,—

“ Now bend thee, tree, and bend thee bough,
My child has no peace nor rest, I trow;
Now bend you leaves, and bend thee grass,
And let all ill and danger pass.”

IV.—EBERHARD'S RETURN HOME.

THE tops of the pine-trees glisten in the first blush of dawn, and the sun rises slowly behind the mountains; for its rising appears to our eye much more gradual than its set. The owls hoot for the last time in their hidden retreats,—the clear throats of the little songsters upon the trees twitter as in a dream. The sun rises higher up, and breathes as it were a mild and trembling glow upon the stems of the trees; and all is silent around, in the cool shades of the forest, as if some spirit were wandering through a holy place. The trees draw close their foliage, as with an instinctive feeling of awe, and quiver gently, and the birds hold in their breath. Then all at once a linnet's note is heard, exultingly loud and clear,—others join in,—a joyous chorus of song resounds through the forest—the day has dawned! The dewdrops glisten in all the colours of the rainbow, and the lady-birds creep up the blades of grass, and their shining wings glitter in the sunlight. The butterflies flutter about, and greet the little flowers



boy, fast asleep, with his right hand under his head. It is Eberhard.

as they awaken from their sleep; and the floweret turns, and bends its head from side to side in the gentle breath of morn, greeting its sisters far and wide around, and sending forth its sweet perfume into the wide world of life.

On the moss, beneath a beautiful pine-tree, close to a bed of wild strawberries in full flower, lies a

The dog sits beside him, with his eyes fixed upon the boy: he no longer snaps at the flies, but only brushes them gently off, as if afraid to awaken Eberhard by the least noise.

The sunbeams kissed the boy's cheek, and gave it a still redder glow; but Eberhard slept on calmly, as if the dark night were around him: once only he sighed aloud, then turned, and fell asleep again. A man stepped out from the thicket; the dog sprang to meet him, wagging his tail; but Gottfried (for it was he) put the dog away from him, and stood for some minutes gazing upon the sleeping boy: at length he bent over him, and cried into his ear, "Cuckoo!" Eberhard awoke,—he twinkled and rubbed his eyes: he knew not where he was, and looked in speechless amazement around. When Gottfried inquired how he had come there, he no longer answered with a joke, but he wept, for he thought of his mother.

"I had some talk with your mother yesterday," said Gottfried, "and we have settled that, if you like, you shall be a schoolmaster. A ranger's life is dangerous to your family, and you are an only child. What say you?"

"Oh, yes, anything that you and mother wish, and I promise you I will be diligent; but now I must make haste home." So saying, away ran Eberhard, and the dog bounded on before. He was afraid lest Gottfried should ask him about the past night, and the whole came back to his mind like a dark and heavy dream. How he shouted with joy when he came in sight of his mother's cottage! the dog had reached it first, but he now came pacing slowly back. Eberhard called aloud to his mother from afar off, but she did not appear. He found the door and windows all fastened up. "Surely," thought he, "mother must have gone out early in the morning to look for me; or can she have been wandering about the whole night in the forest?" Eberhard now felt how painful it is to remain waiting anxiously for any one we love, whilst hour after hour passes and no one comes. At length, however, some one did come,—it was the poacher, who stepped out from the thicket, looking cautiously around. Eberhard shrieked aloud, as if he were going to be murdered; but the man said, "Be quiet! I have brought you here a beautiful present: you wished for a squirrel, but here's something far prettier,—a young fox. Only promise me not to say a word of anything that has passed between us." So saying, the poacher took a young fox out of a coarse cloth, put a little chain round its

neck, fastened this to the kennel, and then vanished as suddenly as he had appeared.

Eberhard's mother at length returned home ; silent and sobbing she threw her arms about her child's neck, and stroked his forehead

again and again, to be assured that it was he,—that he was really alive. Eberhard said nothing of his adventures in the forest, and for this want of frankness he had a heavy punishment in store for him. When the good woman saw the fox, she was going to untie it, and let it run back into the wood ; but she was afraid to touch the animal, and so the fox remained tied up, and Eberhard told his mother that it had been

given him by a man in the forest.



Eberhard now led a happy and peaceful life again, but he was not allowed to go into the forest by himself ; and yet an irresistible desire, a kind of spell, drew him thither. The bright and tranquil days of life leave behind them the least frequent remembrances ; and even when we recall them, their occurrences are related with greater difficulty than those passages in our lives which are ruled with less even lines. Nevertheless these very days are the most blessed we enjoy. But in this respect it is with individuals as with nations ; to the latter, half a century is what a day is to the former. The history of a people records only the extraordinary events that have taken place, and the same was the case, we see, with the history of Eberhard's youth. How glorious were the hours and days he spent in the cornfield on the hill behind the cottage, watching the corn as it waved to and fro like a stream, or fancying it a majestic forest, with its huge giant stems !—it seems so, at all events, to the little insects, as they run about among the corn, and stop again and again to rest in the weary effort of climbing up a blade. We call things great and small, but all depends upon the manner in which we view them ; and when we extend our thoughts to the

universe, our earth is but a little ball, and we men are only tiny creatures that creep about on it.

Often did Eberhard stand in the ploughed field and reflect upon this problem of existence, and thoughts of infinity passed unconsciously through his mind. Or he would stretch himself on the strip of grass by the field-side, and lie watching the little insects, as they hurried about among the grass; or he looked up into the blue sky, where the pale moon stood in the clear noonday, patiently awaiting her time, when she should come forth in her mild glory, and the world should gaze upon her bright orb. How unutterable were the feelings that passed through Eberhard's breast! he thought of everything, and yet he knew not what. And then he would get up, and stretch his limbs with a vigorous feeling of delight, and involuntarily shout aloud, or stand silent and thoughtful from the very fulness of his joy. There is something mysteriously refreshing in reposing upon the earth, and a deep meaning is conveyed in the old Greek legend of Antæus, who was weak when lifted from the earth, but became invincibly strong the instant he touched it again.

One day as Eberhard was lying in a furrow, looking thoughtfully up at the sky, and listening to a quail in the wheat-field close by, he saw a pretty linnet, apparently just fledged, flying a short distance and then dropping again on the ground. Eberhard wished to catch the bird. Suddenly he jumped up, nimble and light-hearted as if he had just been bathing in a fresh stream, and ran after it from bush to bush; but no sooner did he come near it than the linnet was off again. Still he did not give up the chase, but ran on and on until he came to a deep ditch: the bird flew over it, and perching on a spray upon the opposite side sang a pretty song—a song which no one had taught it. Eberhard stopped and reflected, that before he could climb down the bank and up the other side, the bird would have a long start of him. Opening and shutting his hand, he smiled to himself as he thought, "How wonderfully birds' feet are made! the bird hops from bough to bough, and never misses the twig, nor falls. And how quickly too it can open and shut its claws—and what a good eye it must have to calculate it all, and so quickly! To be sure," he added half aloud, and turning his head round, "they have also a much cleverer neck than we, to turn about so easily; whilst we have to turn our whole body if we want to look round." Breaking off from this train of thought, Eberhard continued his walk, singing a merry song.

Reader, if any one were to lead you to a spot, and say, "Listen now to the echo!" you would think little of it: but it is very different when you come upon it alone and unawares, as Eberhard now did. He started when he heard the sound of his voice echoed from the forest in a clear and lengthened tone; but recovering himself he cried "O ho!" . . . "O ho!" repeated the echo from the depths of the wood. And again he cried, "No bird can do that, or make the forest speak!" . . . "Speak!" returned the echo. Then he exclaimed, "Gottfried!" and instantly the name sounded from side to side. And now he shouted aloud his own name, "Eberhard!" and the echo came back, "Eberhard!" What a happy feeling shot through the boy's heart, as he heard his name repeated far and wide around, and in his joy he exclaimed, "Now all the trees know my name." . . . "my name!" repeated the rocks around. With inexpressible delight Eberhard stood playing thus with the echo, which he had been the first to awaken; never before had any one on this very spot taught the trees and hills to speak. He tried to awaken it from another spot, but it sounded less clear and loud than from that which he had first discovered unawares. He turned round, and said once again, "Farewell!" . . . "Farewell!" replied the echo; and Eberhard went down the hill to his mother's cottage. His breast swelled with emotion; in the depths of the forest he had heard the voice of Nature, who answers to us distinctly when we greet her from the right spot. Oh, were not those happy, blissful days? And yet sorrow was not far distant.

One Saturday afternoon, Eberhard had gone to the village a few miles off, when Cousin Gottfried stopped at the ranger's cottage in passing, and chatted awhile with the widow, who was busy hanging out the linen. She began to complain, that ever since the fox had come to the house she had had no peace or rest with her boy; she was always in dread when he was playing with the animal: for though, in truth, it had not as yet done him any harm, "Who knows," said she, "but that the beast may one day suddenly go wild?" In short, she knew not what to do to prevent mischief.

"That's an easy matter," said Gottfried; and he went to the kennel, unslung his fowling-piece, let the fox loose, and shot him dead. Gottfried laughed at himself for such an easy shot, as he dexterously stripped off the skin and thrust it into his game-bag. "Now you must do me a good turn," said he to the woman. "I have no more shot with me, and I don't like to go through the

wood with an empty pouch—it is not my way. I'll leave my gun here, and take your husband's, which hangs up in the cottage; there is still a bullet left in it." So saying Gottfried took the gun and went his way.

Whilst this was passing at the ranger's cottage, the poacher was watching for Eberhard on his return home from the village. He stationed himself in a deep hole, where the stump of a tree had been dug out, and soliloquised thus:—"So, Eberhard is to be a schoolmaster! I may then wait long enough before the shot that is destined for me will hit its mark; and am I to be kept in this suspense, and going about for ever in fear and dread? Ay, and after all, perhaps, the mark of the murder will stick to my family, and the folks up yonder go free! No, by heaven, no! For ages it has gone turn and turn with our families, and now 'tis their turn to bear the guilt: the ranger has left one shot behind him—that is my death-shot; it is time that my fate should be accomplished."

At this instant Eberhard came singing past; the poacher stepped across his path, and presented to him a young thrush. The boy took the bird, but he instantly let it fly away, and turned a deaf ear to the poacher's soft words and promises. The man offered to teach him to shoot, better than any boy of his age far and wide; and this was a great temptation to Eberhard, but he suppressed his wish, and remained resolute. "Only bring me your father's gun to the Shady Hollow, and you shall have whatever you like," said the man in a beseeching tone; but Eberhard ran off and the poacher cried after him, "If you alter your mind, you can come—I shall be there in the morning."

"But I shall not come," said Eberhard to himself; and he hastened home. When he came there and found the fox gone, he flew into a rage, and entreated his mother to tell him what had become of the animal. But his mother gave him no answer, and only forbade his asking any more questions about the fox. As he was looking about, he perceived some drops of blood on the ground: his anger was now excited to the utmost, and he resolved to himself at all hazards to get another fox.

V.—FURTHER ADVENTURES IN THE FOREST.

THE next morning, whilst his mother was still asleep, Eberhard stole downstairs into the sitting-room: his hand trembled as

he seized the gun, and took it down. The dog bounded for joy when he saw his young master thus armed, and they soon disappeared among the trees, but this time they went together.

The morning dew lay still undisturbed upon ground and bush; no foot of bird or beast had brushed it off, nor had the sun's



rays drunk it up. Eberhard struck into the young plantation, where the tangled boughs seemed purposely to oppose his going further: still he went resolutely on and on. Presently he heard some one singing at a distance; Eberhard hastily concealed the gun among the bushes, for he recognised the voice of Gottfried,—

“ Awake, ye birds in bush and brake !
Ye little nightingales, awake !
Sing with your bills, that seem to be
Turned as it were of ivory.
Praise God, sweet Prattlers of the grove,
And sing to Him who reigns above !”

Eberhard stood still, with folded hands, and prayed fervently: his own strong sense of duty came back, and he resolved to return home unseen, and never more to do such a wrong action. But the triumph over his wrong feelings was incomplete, or he would not have feared to meet the good man and frankly to confess to him his crime, instead of endeavouring to steal away unobserved. And this very feeling, of the fear of man, more than of the all-seeing eye of God, caused Eberhard a deep and bitter pang.

The dog barked: Gottfried came up. After his first expression

of surprise at meeting Eberhard thus a third time in so strange a manner, he said, "Don't run about alone in the forest; the Spaniard Michael is again in these parts, and he is not a man to be trusted."

"Who is the Spaniard Michael?" said Eberhard.

"Come out of this thicket, and I will tell you the story; you must hear it one time or another."

Eberhard was in anxiety at leaving the spot, fearing that he should not find the bush again where he had hidden the gun; however he managed unseen to break off a fir-twigs, and place it across another which lay upon the ground: he knew the marks used by the rangers. They now went out into the older and more open part of the forest; then Gottfried sitting down on the stump of a tree, and Eberhard on the bank opposite to him, the former thus began:—

"The Spaniard Michael and all his family have, time out of mind, been the enemies of your family; for your father, grandfather, and great-grandfather—ay, and further back still—were all rangers here; and the family of the Spaniard Michael have always been poachers in these forests. It is not known exactly how the deadly feud between the two families first arose; but, as you know, there always exists a strife between the rangers and poachers: it seems indeed just as if the fierce spirit of the wild-beasts, which are the cause of their enmity, passed into their hearts. Your great-grandfather was shot by one of the Michaels, and your grandfather in turn laid one of them in the dust. Folks say that the whole family are descended from a soldier, who, in times of old, was left behind in these parts by the Spanish army; they have hot, fiery blood in their veins. As surely as the sun now shines, your father was killed by a shot from the Spaniard Michael, who, having been let out of prison, wanders about here in the forests, and follows his old trade. You know that the laws against the poachers, and the murders they commit, are seldom enforced—there is a kind of understanding between rangers and poachers, and indeed little good would come of putting the law in execution. The Spaniard Michael was thrown into prison after your father's death, but he lied through thick and thin until he got out again; who knows what is now in his mind?—certainly no good. I have already experienced his malice: my servant-lad met him late last night in the wood, and this morning I find nails driven red-hot into my finest pine-trees, so that they must perish. The Spaniard Michael knows how I love those trees, and for that

very reason he has destroyed them. One could weep tears of blood to think how far the wickedness of men can go,—that they even take delight in destroying the pleasure of others."

Gottfried fetched a deep sigh and then continued:—

"Ay, and the dog there had a share in your father's death! Do you see how he whines? he knows what I am saying. The report of the affair probably originated with the Spaniard Michael himself: he reared the dog, and then had him sold to your father through a dealer. Once when they met in the forest, in deadly enmity, the dog leaped first upon one and then on the other, not knowing which was his master: both called and whistled to him, and just as your father was turning angrily round, the Spaniard Michael shot him dead upon the spot. Yes, howl dog, howl! thou art indeed like many a human dog, who has sold himself, and no longer knows to whom he belongs." Cousin Gottfried concluded his story and rose up.

Eberhard felt his limbs totter; he could scarcely stand upright: scalding tears stood in his eyes, and yet he could not weep: he pressed his eyelids as if he would force himself to sleep, and thus find relief from the frightful story he had heard. Gottfried held out his hand to him as he bade him good-by, and again cautioned him to return quickly home. The dog had lain his head on Eberhard's knee, but the boy now stood up, pushed him away, and hastened into the plantation to fetch the gun, which he soon found by the mark he had left; but on looking at it closely, he fancied it seemed a strange one. Could any one have been there and changed it? As he stood thinking thus, the poacher came out of the thicket.

"Are you the Spaniard Michael?" cried Eberhard, raising the gun and cocking it.

"I am," exclaimed the man.

"Was it you who shot my father?"

"Yes,—but stop, you have no powder in the pan: give me the gun." He snatched it from Eberhard, primed it from his flask, then gave it back to him, and placing himself before the muzzle said, "Now, fire!" Eberhard stood speechless, and pale as death.

"Chicken-hearted boy!" exclaimed the poacher with a sneer. "Courage, lad,—fire!"

Eberhard recovered his speech, and throwing himself on the ground he cried out that he would not fire, but would sooner die himself. The poacher lifted up the gun together with the

boy, kept Eberhard's mouth closed to prevent his crying, and ran through the wood down into the Shady Hollow, to a deep ravine shut in by overhanging rocks ; there he set the lad down, and said, "Now cry as you will — no ear will hear you. Upon this spot you must shoot me. I might have confessed the murder, but no, I will rather die here abroad in the green forest ; and I will die by your hand, boy ! The mark of murder must again rest with your family — it shall not remain with us : turn and turn — so it has always been, and so it must continue." As he said this, he placed Eberhard upon a projecting piece of rock, put the gun, ready primed and cocked, into his hand, stationed himself upon another rock opposite, and then drawing a dagger from his pocket, he cried out in a fierce tone, "Fire ! or you are dead — be quick !"

Involuntarily Eberhard's finger was upon the trigger, when the dog leaped on him, as if to stay his hand. "Ha ! are *you* there again ?" cried Michael, gnashing his teeth : in a moment he snatched his dagger and plunged it into the dog's neck ; then putting up the dagger again, he flung the body of the poor animal into a hole. A third time he primed the gun, and standing before it exclaimed, "Quick — pull the trigger !"

"I will not die, and I will not do murder !" shrieked Eberhard.
"Fire ! or——"

At this moment a shot was heard from a rock above ; Michael staggered back, exclaiming as he fell, "'Tis the death shot !"

He was right : Gottfried was standing above, with the gun which he had borrowed from the ranger's widow : he had observed what was passing, and at once guessing the truth, he had thus put an end to the dreadful scene and saved Eberhard.

The smoke drew slowly off the damp rocks and trees ; Michael, had breathed his last. A number of newly made nails, which had fallen from his pocket, lay strewn upon the ground : they were exactly like those in the pine-trees. With the death of the Spaniard Michael the frightful succession of murders terminated. Would that he might be the last sacrifice to that spirit of cupidity and revenge by which man desecrates the sanctity of the forest !

AND Eberhard ? — he was carried home insensible, and lay for several weeks in a fever. When old enough, he was placed in a school for training schoolmasters : his love of nature, which began in childhood, led him to make the science of natural history his

peculiar study ; and here he learned also to understand many things which had formerly perplexed him, and to rectify many errors which, when an uninstructed boy, he had looked upon as undoubted truths. One thing in his studies was very strange to Eberhard,—he no longer recognised many of the birds of his own native forests, although carefully stuffed in the museums, accurately figured in books, and described from their internal structure and outward appearance ; for one thing was wanting—and this with birds is the chief one—song. Eberhard tried to write down the songs of the birds with musical notes and letters, but he soon gave up the attempt : there are things which cannot be committed to paper nor learnt from books, and this too has its good.

When Eberhard had ended his schooling, he joined an expedition of discovery for purposes of natural history into Africa. Accustomed from his youth up to a spirit of independence and a wild roving life, he bears the toil and hardships of this life more easily than many others. He has already discovered several new species of birds, and sent home many rare objects of interest.

Eberhard's name is now mentioned with honour : who knows whether this gives him as much joy as when the lonely echo in the forest repeated it ? He is now far away, and cannot prevent our relating the stories of his youth. Perhaps he will, some day or other, inform us himself what life one leads in Africa, and whether there are in that country also such wicked poachers.

On the spot where the Spaniard Michael fell there still stands a stone cross, half buried in the ground, and the wild roses twine and blossom around the mossy stone.





MUSCIPULA.

Sir Joshua Reynolds.

MUSCIPULA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE GOODNATURED BEAR."

"TAKE pity upon *me*, a poor little Mouse, who has had the misfortune to creep into this hard place, attracted by the smell of something nice in the inside! I little thought I should not be able to creep out again. Take pity upon *me*, dear Miss Muscipula, and this once—only this once—open the trap-door! I am the mother of a large family—all entirely dependant upon my exertions; and we live, if you please, Miss Muscipula, in a little round hole in the field, at the bottom of your ladyship's garden.

"Of that round hole in the bank underneath the hawthorn tree, my husband, Mr. Squeakmould, and I, have been the humble tenants these two seasons. We do not take up much room, and we do very little mischief. Indeed, we do no mischief at all, because the few nibbles we take at cabbage-stalks and young peatops, which are necessary to our existence, only do the plants good, by giving more room. We also do a great deal of service to your ladyship's garden, by frightening away a variety of impudent insects with large mouths, who feed like horny lions and hairy serpents upon the sweet green leaves and tender shoots, besides rumpling the flowers. I think I perceive you are smiling, Queen Muscipula, and that you are not displeased with us for living in your dominions. I think you might have many far less loyal subjects than your most obedient humble servants, Mr. and Mrs. Squeakmould and family. I also think your eye has once or twice glanced down at the fastening of this trap, in which I am kneeling, as though you were thinking of letting me out.

"As to my family, they are composed of poor Mr. Squeakmould, five young mice-daughters, and one promising mouse-son. Poor Mr. Squeakmould—*wee wee wee!* forgive these tears—as I was about to inform you—*wee wee wee!*—has been laid up in one corner of our house with a sore toe, under which affliction he is very peevish and impatient. He lost a whole nail and nearly a barley-corn's length of skin with the hair upon it, and has not done a scratch of work these three weeks. I think sometimes that he *could* do a little work with the other three legs, besides nibbling; but I always *was* a most indulgent mouse-wife, and I am sure that I shall not sink in your ladyship's opinion upon that account, as

one female always has a proper feeling for another. I venture to hope that you will graciously allow me to escape from this trap?

“How green and beautiful the fields were this morning, when I first peeped out of my hole and tickled a dewdrop with the point of one trembling whisker! As it smiled, and melted, and fell, I thought of the pleasantness and freshness of life, and also of its shortness. Mr. Squeakmould was still asleep. He had passed a shocking night with his toe. And I had my share of it—of the shocking night, I mean, not his dear toe. My five daughters were also still asleep; but my son was playing with the extreme tip of my tail, which I left dangling down to the bottom of our nest, to keep him quiet. So, as I was meditating in this tender and instructive manner upon the beauties of the fields, not without an occasional glance at the many good little things coming up in your ladyship’s benevolent garden, gradually, to the soft sound of bells in the distance, and of a rivulet close by, there came hovering upon the summer air the wonderful smell of cheese! Am I correct in thinking that I saw your white fingers approaching the unpleasant fastening of this trap, with the intent to set me at liberty?

“But what could I do when I smelt cheese? It is well known to all natural historians that the odour of this sweetmeat has an effect quite irresistible upon the whole nervous system of the mouse species. I therefore crept cautiously forth, following the graceful and infallible motions of my whiskers, which continued to wave and lead me onward. “They marshalled me the way that I should go,” as our poet, Master Speargrass, whose fame has extended through every *corner* of the field, heroically expresses it. With whiskers erect and quivering I advanced, until at length I arrived in front of a dark circular temple of wire, in the midst of which, like a great lamp from the roof, hung the orange-coloured morsel with the magical odour.

“I feel persuaded by your ladyship’s expressive smile that your fingers, now placed upon the fastening of this trap—Ah! what do I see?—the door beginning to open!—the green fields shine and call to me—my liberty—my children—poor Mr. Squeak—ah! the door opens! Squeakmould!—all our blessings upon you, Miss Muscipula!—the fresh dewy grass—farewell for ever, O thou cheese!

ENIGMA.

WHILE yet in groves of ancient oak,
 Or mystic ring of stones,
 To savage tribes the Druid spoke
 'Mid human victims' groans ;
 Ere Britons learned my first to trace
 With Roman style or pen,
 Ere yet my second sprang to grace
 The British plains,—oh ! then
 'Twas I that fed that hardy race,
 Boadicea's men !

My first is now of that steep flight
 The student climbs to fame,
 Th' initiate step ;— he cannot write
 Without my aid a name.
 My second now from every board
 Throughout this favoured isle,
 Welcomed by peasant and by lord,
 Has banished me the while.
 I'm left to rot on the green sward
 Which birds and swine defile.

Ungrateful land ! your cold neglect
 On me alone bestow ;
 But spare my children, who protect
 Your shores from every foe.
 In prime of life they bow their heads
 Beneath the axe's stroke ;—
 Yet landsmen sleep on peaceful beds,
 While 'mid the battle smoke
 My offspring bear, where ocean spreads,
 The British hearts of oak.





A BALLAD OF ROBIN HOOD.

KIND gentlemen will ye be silent awhile,
And then ye shall all hear anon,
A very good ballad of bold Robin Hood,
And of his brave man Little John.

9.

In Lockesley town, in Nottinghamshire,
In merry sweet Lockesley town,
There bold Robin Hood he was born
and was bred,
Bold Robin of famous renown.

K

The father of Robin a forester was,
And he shot with a lusty strong bow,
Two north-country miles and an inch at
a shot,
As the Pinder of Wakefield does
know.

For they brought Adam Bell, and Clym
of the Clough,
And William of Cloudesle,
To shoot with the forester for forty
marks,
And the forester beat them all three.

His mother was niece to the Coventry
knight, [Guy,
Whom Warwickshire men call Sir
For he slew the blue boar that hangs
up at his gate,
Or my host at the Bull tells a lie.

Her brother was Gamewell, of great
Gamewell Hall,—
A noble housekeeper was he,
As ever broke bread in sweet Notting-
hamshire,
And a squire of famous degree.

The mother of Robin said to her hus-
band,
“ My honey, my love, and my dear,
Let Robin and I ride this morn to
Gamewell,
To taste of my brother’s good cheer.”

“ I grant thee thy boon,” he said, “ gen-
tle Joan ;
Take one of my horses, I pray ;
The sun is arising, and therefore make
haste,
For to-morrow is Christmas-day.”

Then Robin Hood’s father’s grey geld-
ing was brought,
And saddled and bridled was he :
O what a blue bonnet ! and new suit of
clothes !
And a cloak that hung down to his
knee !

She put on her holiday kirtle and gown,
They were all of a light Lincoln green :
The cloth was homespun, but for colour
and make
They might have beseemèd our queen.

And then Robin got on his basket-hilt
sword,
With a dagger on the other side ;
And said, “ My dear mother, let’s haste
to be gone,
We have forty long miles for to ride.”

When Robin had mounted his gelding
so grey,
His father, without any trouble,
Set her up behind him, and bid her not
fear,
His gelding had oft carried double.

And when she was settled, they rode to
their neighbours, [all,
And drank and shook hands with ‘em
And then Robin galopp’d and never
gave over
Till they alighted at Gamewell Hall.

And now you may think the right wor-
shipful squire
Was joyful his sister to see ;
He kiss’d her and kiss’d her, and swore
by his beard, [me.”
“ Thou art welcome, kind sister, to

The morrow, when mass had been said
in the chapel,
Six tables were laid in the hall ;
And in came the squire and made a
short speech, [all.
It was, “ Gentlemen, you’re welcome

But not a man here shall taste my
March beer,
Till a carol of Christmas he sing.”
Then all clapt their hands, they shouted
and sung,
Till the hall and the parlour did ring.

Now mustard and brawn, roast beef and
plum-pies,
Were set upon every table ;
And noble George Gamewell said, “ Eat
and be merry,
And drink, sirs, as long as you’re able.”

When dinner was over his chaplain said
grace,
And “ Be merry, my friends,” said
the squire ; [ale,
“ It rains and it blows, but call for more
And lay some more wood on the fire.

And now call ye my Little John unto me,

For Little John is a fine lad,
At gambols, and jugglings, and twenty such tricks,

As shall make you both merry and glad."

When Little John came, to gambols they went,

Both gentlemen, yeomen, and clown,
And, what do you think? why, as true as I live,

Bold Robin Hood put them all down.

And now you may think the right worshipful squire

Was joyful this sight for to see;
For he said, "Cousin Robin, thou go'st no more home," [me.

But shalt tarry and dwell here with

Thou shalt have all my land when I die; and till then

Thou must be the staff of my age."
"Then grant me this boon, dear uncle," says Robin,

"That Little John may be my page."

"Kind cousin," he said, "I grant thee thy boon,

With all my heart: so let it be."

"Come here, Little John," then said Robin Hood,

"Come hither, my page, unto me.

Go fetch me my bow, my longest yew-bow,

And broad arrows one, two, or three;
And when 'tis fair weather we'll into Sherwood,

Some merry pastime for to see."

When Robin came into merry Sherwood,
He winded his bugle so clear;

And twice five-and-twenty good yeomen and bold,

Before Robin Hood did appear.

"Where are your companions," said bold Robin Hood,

"For I still I want forty and three?"

Then said the bold yeoman, "Lo! yonder they stand,

All under the greenwood tree."

As that word was spoke Clorinda came by,

The queen of all shepherds was she;
And her gown it was velvet, as green as the grass,

And her buskin did reach to her knee.

Her gait it was graceful, her body was straight,

And her countenance free from all pride; [rows,

A bow in her hand, and a quiver of ar-Hung dangling down by her side.

Her eye-brows were black,—ay, and so was her hair,

And her skin was as smooth as a glass;
Her visage spoke wisdom and modesty too:

Not with Robin Hood was such a lass.

Says Robin Hood, "Lady fair, whither away,

O whither, fair lady, away?"

And she made him answer, "To kill a fat buck,

For to-morrow is Tidbury day."

Said bold Robin Hood, "Lady fair, come with me

A little, to yonder green bow'r;

There sit down to rest you, and you may be sure

Of a brace or a leash in an hour."

And as they were going towards the green bow'r,

Two hundred fat bucks they espied;
She chose out the fattest that was in the herd, [side.

And shot him right through side and

"By the faith of my body," says bold Robin Hood,

"I ne'er saw a woman like thee!

And com'st thou from east, or com'st thou from west,

Thou need'st not beg ven'son of me.

However, along to my bow'r thou shalt go,

And taste of a forester's meat."

And when they came there, they found as good cheer

As any man need for to eat.

For there was hot ven'son, and warden
pies cold,
Cream clotted, and honeycombs
plenty; [John,
And the servitors were, besides Little
Good yeomen at least four-and-twenty.

Clorinda said, "Tell me your name,
gentle sir,"
And he said, "It is bold Robin Hood;
'Squire Gamewell's my uncle, but all my
delight
Is to dwell here in merry Sherwood.

For 'tis a fine life, and devoid of all
strife."

"So 'tis, sir," Clorinda replied.
"But O!" said bold Robin, "how sweet
would it be
If Clorinda would be my sweet bride!"

She blushed at the motion; yet, after a
pause,
Said, "Yes, sir, and with all my heart."
"Let us send for a priest, then," said
Robin Hood,
"And be married before we do part."

Said she, "But it may not be so, gentle
sir,
For I must be at Tidbury feast;
And if Robin Hood will go thither with
me,
I'll make him a most welcome guest."

Said Robin Hood, "Reach me that buck,
Little John,
For I'll go along with my dear;
And bid my good yeomen kill six brace
of bucks,
And meet me to-morrow just here!"

Then a garland they brought her by two and by two,
And placed it all on the bride's head;
Then music struck up, and they all fell a-dancing,
'Till Phœbus had gone to his bed.

Before they had gone five Staffordshire
miles, [bold,
Eight yeomen, that were much too
Bid Robin Hood stand and deliver his
buck,—
A truer tale never was told.

"I will not, i'faith," said bold Robin;
"Come, John,
Stand by me, and we'll beat them all."
They both drew their swords, and so
cut 'em and slash'd 'em,
That five out of eight did soon fall;

The three that remain'd call'd to Robin
for quarter,
And pitiful John begg'd their lives.
When John's boon was granted, he gave
them good counsel,
And sent them all home to their wives.

When dinner was ended, Sir Roger, the
parson
Of Dumbridge, was sent for in haste;
He brought his mass-book, and bid them
take hands,
And he join'd them in marriage full
fast.

And then, as bold Robin Hood and his
bride
Went hand-in-hand to the green bow'r,
The birds sung with pleasure in merry
Sherwood,
And it was a most joyful hour.

And when Robin Hood came in sight of
the bow'r,
"O, where are my yeomen?" said he;
And Little John answered, "Lo, yonder
they stand
All under the greenwood tree."





THE BEECH.

From "The Woodland Companion," by Dr. Aikin.

THE beech is one of the most stately timber trees, and composes large woods in some parts of this country. It particularly delights in a chalky soil, where it will flourish and arrive at a great size, though the land has all the appearance of barrenness. When standing singly, or at large distances from other trees, it spreads in a round form to a wide extent, and forms a deep mass of shade; but when drawn up in close plantations, it rises to a great height, with singular elegance and airiness. Its leaves are of a pleasant green, and many of them remain on the trees during winter, after turning brown. No verdure, however, will thrive beneath its shade. The smoothness of its bark has from ancient times tempted the rural lover to carve the favourite name upon it—a custom recorded in various passages of the poets; and the opening of Virgil's first Eclogue represents the musing shepherd as reclining under the shade of a spreading beech.

This is one of the glandiferous or mast-bearing trees. Its nuts, when eaten raw, are apt to occasion giddiness and head-ache, but, when thoroughly dried and powdered, are said to make wholesome

bread. They are, however, chiefly the food of deer and swine, and of squirrels, dormice, and other small quadrupeds, which are numerous in the beechen woods. An oil expressed from them is used in some countries in place of butter.

The wood of the beech is brittle, and apt to decay; but, being easily wrought, it is much used for various domestic purposes. The poets, who celebrate the simplicity and frugality of the early ages, speak much of the beechen cups and bowls, some of which received an extraordinary value from the hand of the carver. In our days, beech is a common material of the turner and cabinet-maker; the former using it for his larger ware, and the latter for common chairs and other articles of furniture. It is, indeed, almost the only English wood employed by the London cabinet-makers. Its lightness causes it to be chosen for the handles of tools; and it is split into thin scales for band-boxes, sword-scabbards, and the like. It is a common wood for fuel, and, in some countries, is regularly grown in plantations for that purpose. The dried leaves of the beech make a very good stuffing for mattresses.



Beech leaves and mast.

JUNE.

BY MARY ROBERTS.

LET us walk beside the river, flowing in its own calm, silent beauty, and reflecting the summer-clouds as they sail majestically through the heavens. On its margin grow tall bullrushes, and willow herbs, marsh marigolds, and St. John's wort, with their reddish-yellow blossoms opening only to the sunbeams; and, as if calmly resting on their oars, white water-lilies, beautiful as those which crowd the little bays and inlets of the Alpine lakes, are seen on either side. Their snow-white globes float on the bosom of broad leaves, and beneath them the speckled trout often swim for shelter, when storms or a swiftly passing boat disturb the surface of the stream. Very pleasant, in this warm month, is the fresh breeze that comes from off the water, and soothing is it to watch the tranquil current thus gliding on, undisturbed by rocks or eddies.

There is the stile and narrow path that leads into the meadow, through which the river winds. Yesterday the grass stood thick, moonflowers, and ragged-robin, buttercups, meadow-sweets, and cuckoo-flowers, lifted their heads above the undulating verdure. Field-mice dwelt safely, and brought up their young; and the field-lark built her simple nest beside some over-arching tuft, and soared and warbled in the early morning, when scarcely the wakeful labourer was abroad: butterflies flitted from one flower to another, and bees went in and out to visit the fragrant clover. But now the success of the rapid scythe is laying the herbage low. What a deep, still sound it is! for the men are too intent upon their work to talk, and no other noise is heard, except the gentle ripple of the quiet river. A beautiful array of flowers falls at every stroke, while the rich grass, sinking before the scythes of the strong mowers, settles in waves one beyond the other. We might gather a bouquet of wild flowers from off those waves, for the sun has not yet withered them.

The field is large. It will take a long day, perhaps, even more, to cut down the whole. We cannot wait much longer, pleasant as it is to watch the mowers; but we will go a little further up the hill, and turn into Farmer Welford's field, where we shall find something more going on, for his grass was cut last week.

What a cheerful and merry scene! Few country sights are more pleasing than a field with haymakers at work. It was sad to see

the grass and wild-flowers falling before the rapid scythe—to think of the field-larks' nest, and the distress of the poor little mice driven in a moment from their homes; to think, too, that dull winter must pass over us before we can see again bright flowers in the same green meadow! But here all is joyous.

The haymakers work blithely, tossing about the grass, and talking and laughing right merrily. This is a holyday, both for old and young. Many who are employed in manufactures, with their wives and children, obtain leave to work in the fields when hands are scarce; and the doing so seems like a new life to them. You may see at the further end, hillocks of grass thrown up in long rows; the haymakers call them wind-cocks; they are piled light and high, that the wind may blow through them; but in this part of the field people are tossing the hay about. Grey-headed old men are here, aged women, and children, seemingly without number. Their parents are hard at work, and very glad are they to put the "wee things" in safe keeping among the old folks, who yet can help a little. Look at those girls and boys at play—see how they pelt one another with the hay, and roll each other over upon the grass—these are happy days. See those youngsters, scarcely able to totter, how they tumble on the sweet, fresh grass; while those who have strength to handle the rake mimic the labours of their parents, and draw tiny loads along the greensward. Meanwhile the hay is thrown about, and with each returning day comes the same pleasant labour, till the creaking of a wagon, lumbering up the hollow road from the old farm-house, half way down the hill, gives the signal, which tells that the haymaking season is about to close. A short time elapses, and the creak of the heavy-laden wagon is heard ringing over the stones. It comes up again for another load, then lumbers back to the old farm, where labourers are busily employed in placing the hay upon a strong foundation of wattled boughs. Some tread down the hay; others throw it up from out the wagon; till at length loud huzzas, that wake up all the neighbouring echoes, announce that all the hay-stacks are completed.

June is the shearing month; the season, too, for bees to swarm; and those who are much abroad in the fields may often hear the loud ringing of a warming-pan from some cottage garden, designed, as in the days of Virgil, to drive the bee colony to shelter.



THE MADONNA DELLA SEDIA.

(From the German.)

MANY hundred years ago, there lived in the beautiful land of Italy an aged recluse. After many severe trials and losses, he had retired to a deep solitary ravine, there to spend his last days in

peace and devotion. Yet such was his reputation for wisdom and goodness, that even there he was sought out by many persons; and the sorrowful or downcast mind always found counsel and comfort in his lowly hut. He was, therefore, justly loved and revered by all who knew him, and he, in return, though so nearly withdrawn from all human society, felt the natural craving of the human heart for sympathy and affection. Two lovely objects supplied this void; these he was accustomed to call his children: one had a voice, the other was dumb. The first was Maria, the little daughter of a neighbouring vine-dresser, who clung to the hermit with the fervour of affection, and often traversed the dark forest alone to visit him and carry bread, flowers, or the rich produce of her father's hills. The dumb child was a lofty and beautiful oak-tree, which grew above his hut, sheltering him with its wide-spreading boughs. With the one favourite, the old man enjoyed the prattle of innocence; he taught the child useful things, made her more familiar with nature, and carefully scattered seeds of goodness in her little heart. Upon the other he bestowed almost paternal care; in the dry summer season he watered its roots from a neighbouring brook; he fed and cherished the little birds which built their nests in its branches; and many a time, by his earnest entreaties, rescued his darling tree from the stroke of the axe.

“Be ever green, my strong and stately daughter,” said the old man, as he clasped his tree. “I understand well the rustling and whispering of thy boughs, and will protect thee till thou overshadowest my grave.”

After a very long, hard winter, during which the hills had been covered with snow to a great depth, a thaw came on so suddenly that the mountain-streams rushed down with terrific force, and caused great devastation in the valleys. One morning, Maria's father came in hastily, exclaiming to his wife, “Alas, our poor dear hermit! we shall never speak with him more. I have just seen from my vineyard how the flood is raging through the valley, so that the trees are only just visible above the waters.”

Maria wept and piteously entreated her father to go to the old man's assistance; but he assured her that it was impossible, for the torrent had been rushing for hours above the roof of his habitation. Yet the hermit was saved!—not, however, by the hand of man: no, his dumb daughter had stood unmoved by the flood, and had supported him in her arms above its violence. He had fled to the roof of his hut, upon first perceiving the rising of the stream; and when that was on the point of being overflowed, he had climbed

the tree, which firmly withstood the fury of the waters, while many of its neighbours were uprooted and borne away. Three days passed before the waters subsided; for three days did the poor old man remain perched in the topmost branches of his tree, exposed to the cold and rain, with no other nourishment than a little dry bread, which he had providentially taken with him.

At length, on the fourth day, when almost powerless and exhausted, he came down, sank upon the damp muddy ground, and waited only for death. But a preserving angel came instead. It was his loving little friend Maria, who had known no rest nor happy moment since the fearful occurrence, and who now hastened through the clammy, miry forest path, with difficulty making her way through the ruins left by the flood. She came to know the fate of the good old man; for, in spite of her father's apprehensions, she clung to the hope of his being yet alive; and in this sweet hope she brought with her a basket of provisions. When she found her poor friend lying on the ground, she threw herself down by him, embraced him with her little arms, and recalled him to consciousness and joy.

The hermit thankfully partook of the nourishing food and reviving cordial which Maria offered him; then he kneeled down and devoutly thanked God for the preservation of his life, and implored Him to bless the instruments of his deliverance, and to exalt them above all their race. Strengthened and refreshed, he suffered Maria to lead him to her father's dwelling, where he abode until he could again withdraw to his solitude.

When Maria had grown up in innocence, beauty, and virtue, and had become a happy wife and mother, her ancient friend, the hermit, had long been numbered with the dead. Maria had closed his eyes, received his last blessing, and like an affectionate daughter had sincerely lamented him. His hut in the glen had fallen to ruins, and his beloved oak-tree had been felled; it was afterwards converted into wine casks, which were purchased by Maria's father.

Now, where is the fulfilment of the old man's prayer? do you ask, my children, since the wood of the beloved tree was doomed to moulder away in dark, damp cellars; and Maria's was a humble, undistinguished lot! Just listen patiently for a moment.

One of these wine-casks happened to have been rolled under the portico of the house, in order to be repaired and in readiness for the approaching season of vintage. Maria, to enjoy the beauty and freshness of the early morning, had seated herself under the portico with her two rosy children, fondling the babe at her bosom,

while the elder one played at her feet. As she gazed upon the valley beneath, once inhabited by her still tenderly remembered old friend, she recollected his blessing, and felt how it had been fulfilled to her in her children. Her serene blue eyes glistened in silent thankfulness.

Just at that time, a young man gently wandered by, apparently lost in meditation or dreaming fancy. It was Raphael Sanzio, the greatest painter of his own and every other age. An image of the Holy Mother and infant Jesus had long hovered before his soul; but never yet had he been able to embody his idea. Full of the engrossing thought, he had set out in his early solitary ramble to collect his powers.

As he passed, Maria greeted him courteously. He looked up at the sound of her gentle voice; and when he perceived the lovely mother and her children, he felt at once that here he had found his so long and vainly desired reality. From the mother's face beamed the holiest love; on her fair bosom rested the angelic infant, while the elder one looked joyfully up, holding in his hand a wand, fashioned into the form of a cross. The artist, in this moment of inspiration, wished to secure the group by sketching it on the spot; he had, however, only a chalk pencil in his hand. The first rays of the morning sun shining on the smooth end of the cask suggested to Raphael the idea that this would suit his purpose. He sketched the beautiful Maria and her children upon it, took it out of the cask, and carried it home, where he allowed himself no rest, until he had worked out and completed his immortal picture of "The Holy Family."

Raphael Sanzio d'Urbino died in 1520, more than 300 years ago; but his picture has not perished, but will be preserved as a sacred treasure from generation to generation.

Thus, dear children, you see how the good old man's blessing has been fulfilled; how his two beloved children have been united again, and in the sacred wood of the oak-tree the features of Maria and her children have been borne down in glorious beauty through centuries. Long will refined taste and devout hearts be enraptured and exalted at beholding that divine work of human art.

Perhaps it may be the good fortune of some amongst you to visit the land of this invaluable painting, where it is yet to be seen and is still renowned under the name of the *Madonna della Sedia*.*

* Our Lady of the Chair.

SPRING FLOWERS.

THE fields are now enamelled with flowers, the trees are sending forth their young and tender leaves, and the bright green of the larch is enlivening the woods. Spring is come,—bright, pleasant, hopeful Spring,—and each day brings forth some new beauty or unfolds the buds of some old favourite; the primroses cover the banks, and the cowslips deck the fields; and

“ The green turf, with daisies ‘broidered o’er.”

In the damp, mossy recesses of the woods the stately orchis rears her purple head, and the “nodding violet” nestles in the grass. Flowers are the friends of those who dwell in the country. Shut out from society, these furnish constant delight to all who watch them carefully: their lovely colours, their graceful forms, their endless succession, give variety and interest to every walk. As the months come round we look for the buds of promise, and see them day by day expanding into beauty. With poets they have always been favourites; and by associating poetry with these lovely nurslings of the woods and fields, a new source of pleasure arises in a country ramble.

“ Flowers to the fair! To you these flowers I bring,
And strive to greet you with an earlier spring.
Flowers sweet, and gay, and delicate, like you,—
Emblems of innocence and beauty too.
With flowers the graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowery wreaths consenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden’s pure and guiltless garden grew.
To loftier forms are rougher tasks assigned;
The sheltering oak resists the stormy wind,
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows;
But this soft family, to cares unknown,
Were born for pleasure and delight alone:
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They spring to cheer the sense and glad the heart.
Nor blush, my fair, to own you copy these,—
Your best, your sweetest empire, is, to please.”—MRS. BARBAULD.

THE SNOWDROP.

“ We’ll follow where the smiling goddess leads,
Through tangled forests or enamelled meads;
O’er pathless hills her airy form we’ll chase,
In silent glades her fairy footsteps trace;
Small pains there needs her footsteps to pursue,
She cannot fly from friendship and from you.

Now the glad earth her frozen zone unbinds,
 And o'er her bosom breathe the western winds.
 Already now the snowdrop dares appear,
 The first pale blossom of the unripened year;
 As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
 Had changed an icicle into a flower,
 Its name and hue the scentless plant retains,
 And winter lingers in its icy veins;
 To these succeed the violet's dusky blue,
 And each inferior flower of fainter hue."—**Mrs. BABBAULD.**

" Fair rising from her snowy couch,
 Wan herald of the floral year;
 The snowdrop marks the spring's approach
 Ere yet the primroses appear,
 Or peeps the crocus from its spotted veil,
 Or odorous violets scent the cold capricious gale."—**SMITH.**

THE DAISY.

The Daisy—"wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower"—soon peeps forth when the wintry snows are gone, rivalling their whiteness; scattered every where, it greets us like a dear, familiar friend; sharing oftentimes the fate of most familiar things, it is prized on its first appearance, but soon forgotten when newer and gaudier flowers display their charms.

" There is a flower, a little flower,
 With silver crest and golden eye,
 That welcomes every changing hour
 And weathers every sky.
 * * * * *

It smiles upon the lap of May,
 To sultry Autumn spreads its charms,
 Lights pale October on his way,
 And twines December's arms.
 * * * * *

'Tis Flora's page. In every place,
 In every season, fresh and fair,
 It opens with perennial grace,
 And blossoms every where.
 On waste and woodland, rock and plain,
 Its humble buds unheeded rise:
 The rose has but a summer's reign,
 The daisy never dies."—**SMITH.**

" When Winter decks his few grey hairs,
 Thee in the scanty wreath he wears;
 Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee;
 Whole summer fields are thine by right,
 And Autumn, melancholy wight!
 Doth in thy crimson head delight,
 When rains are on thee,

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
 Thou greetest the traveller in the lane ;
 If welcome once thou count'st it gain,—
 Thou are not daunted,
 Nor car'st if thou be set at nought :
 And oft alone, in nooks remote,
 We meet thee like a pleasant thought
 When such are wanted.”—WORDSWORTH.

THE DAFFODIL.

The Daffodil is an April flower, often showing its bright yellow blossoms as early as March ; but this year the season has been so cold that even in May they are still in flower. Here, in the south of England, they grow wild, and the people call them “Lent-lilies.”

“I would some flowers of the spring,
 Oh, Proserpina !
 For the flowers now that frightened thou lett'st fall
 From Dis's wagon : daffodils
 That come before the swallow dares, and take
 The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,
 But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
 Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses
 That die unmarried, ere they can behold
 Bright Phœbus in his strength.”—*Winter's Tale*.

And Herrick, in his quaint old verse, thus chants the praise of daffodils,—

“ Fair daffodils, we weep to see
 You haste away so soon,
 As yet the early rising sun
 Has not attained its noon.
 Stay, stay
 Until the hastening day
 Has run,
 But to the even song ;
 And having prayed together, we
 Will go with you along.
 We have short time to stay as you,
 We have as short a spring,
 As quick a growth to meet decay,
 As you or any thing.
 We die
 As your hours do ; and dry away
 Like to the summer's rain,
 Or as the pearls of morning dew,
 Ne'er to be found again.”

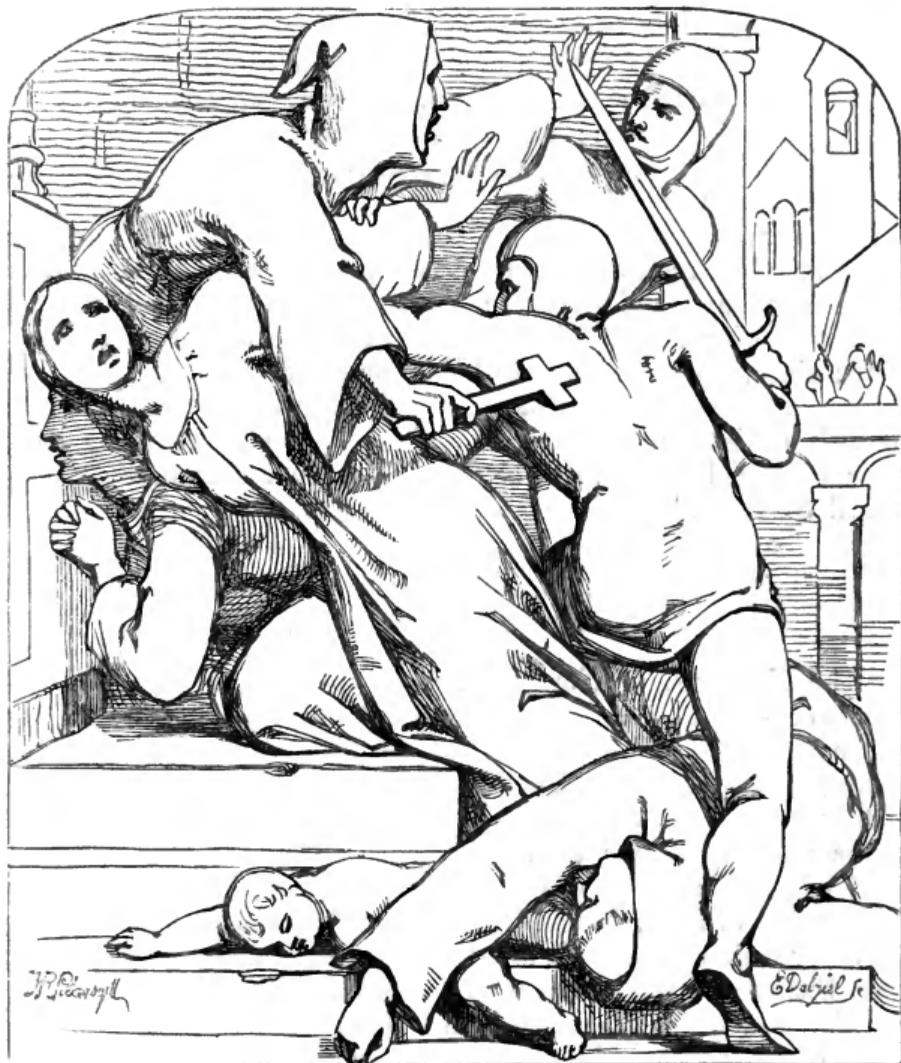


ENIGMA II.

WHAT is that pale blue flow'ret there,
 That trembles in the slightest air?
 Nor roots its slender stem beneath
 This sheltering tree, but loves the heath,
 And yon sunny slope of hill,
 Where basks my first unseen and still;
 Till startled by my second's tongue,
 Heard the nibbling sheep among,
 Or wafted by the fitful breeze
 From those spire-embow'ring trees,
 It perks its mobile downy ears,
 Scared by unnecessary fears;
 Then, by its own foot-beaten track,
 Hies to the ferny covert back.

ENIGMA III.

FOREMOST of every vernal flower
 My second graces after shower,
 My lowly head is reared;
 Ere yet stern Winter yields his sway,
 Or under Sol's dissolving ray,
 My first has disappeared.



HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle, Author of "*Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister.*"

HISTORY abounds with events of such romantic interest, that poets and novelists have drawn many of their best plots from its pages. Shakspeare has no less than ten plays taken from English, three from Roman, one from Grecian, and one from Scottish history; succeeding dramatists have culled from the same field. Sir

Walter Scott introduced the historical romance into our literature; and in many of his novels has skilfully blended history with romance, and given us faithful and valuable pictures of manners and customs now passed away. Fiction, however, can add little to the charm of simple truth; and we may find tales of as deep and powerful interest scattered through history, as ever sprang from the imagination of the novelist.

Amongst the most remarkable events recorded in history are those great struggles which have taken place from time to time between tyranny and freedom: these are important, not only in connexion with the individuals who originated them, but universally; since, wherever man has boldly and successfully resisted the spirit of oppression, a step has been gained in the march of nations towards civilisation. To describe some of these struggles, and shew their beneficial results, will be one aim of your *Playmate's "Historical Sketches."*

NO. I.

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

The Normans, or Northmen, were amongst the most adventurous of the barbarian tribes, who in the Middle Ages ravaged the South of Europe. They dwelt on the shores of the Baltic, and having learned the art of building ships, sailed away in search of distant countries to conquer. They landed and established a colony in the north of France, and, emboldened by success, advanced further, passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and, charmed with the beauty and fertility of Italy, attacked the inhabitants, and possessed themselves by degrees of Apulia and Calabria; they drove the Saracens from Sicily, subdued the three republics of Beneventum, Salerno, and Capua, and finally seizing upon Naples, erected the whole of the south of Italy into a kingdom, under the title of the Two Sicilies, A. D. 1138. The crown continued in the Norman line until 1183, when, in default of male descendants, it was transferred with the hand of Constance, its sole heiress, to Henry VI., emperor of Germany. Frederic II., his successor, bequeathed this kingdom to his son Conrad, on whose death it passed into the hands of Conrardin, a mere child. During the minority of Conrardin his uncle Manfred usurped the government, and by his courteous manners and just administration of affairs gained the attachment of all his subjects. As Conrardin grew up, he became impatient of his uncle's

usurpation, but, wisely desirous of averting the evils of war, he entered into a compromise ; agreeing that Manfred should retain the sceptre during his life, on condition of its reverting to himself at his death.

A feud had long existed between the Popes and the Emperors of Germany ; and Urban IV. was so alarmed by the growing popularity and valour of Manfred, that he unwisely invited Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX. of France, to come to his assistance, promising to invest him with the crown of the Two Sicilies. Charles, induced by the entreaties of his wife Beatrice, an ambitious woman, engaged in the undertaking, and entered Italy at the head of a powerful army. Manfred at once recognised the danger, yet did not shrink from his post. The armies met near Beneventum, and after a fierce and bloody struggle Manfred was slain and his troops routed. Charles then marched straight to Naples, and took possession of his new dominions.

When Conradin heard this fatal news, imploring aid from his German friends, he hastened to revenge his uncle's death and regain the kingdom, of which he was now the rightful sovereign. His courage and valour were alike unavailing, when matched against the experience and subtlety of his rival. Conradin was defeated, taken prisoner, and executed by order of the relentless Charles. When led forth to death, the stripling excited universal sympathy by his tender age, his dignified bearing, but most of all by his innocence. Having mounted the scaffold, he knelt in prayer ; the remembrance of his mother alone daunted his spirit for a moment. " My mother ! my mother ! " he exclaimed, " this news will break your heart." Then rising, he threw his glove amongst the crowd, intreating that some one would carry it to Constance, the daughter of Manfred, and wife of Peter king of Arragon, whom he formally nominated his successor to the Sicilian kingdom.

Charles was now firmly seated on the throne ; his disposition, at all times stern and severe, became, after the death of his wife Beatrice, cruel and blood-thirsty. He oppressed his people with unjust taxes, until unable any longer to endure his tyranny the Sicilians rose and fearfully revenged their wrongs. I shall give an abridged account of this insurrection in the words of the Italian historian Giannone.

Giovanni di Procida, a nobleman of Salerno and lord of Procida, was a firm adherent of the house of Swabia, and greatly esteemed both by Frederick II. and Manfred. After the fatal termination of the battle of Beneventum, he was present at the execution of Con-

radin, picked up the glove thrown by the youthful victim from the scaffold, and hastening to Spain gained admittance to Queen Constance. To her he delivered this dying bequest, together with the message of her nephew. Constance was deeply affected by the news; both she and her husband received Procida with the greatest kindness, and created him baron of Valencia. Giovanni, touched by this generosity, devoted all his energies to their service; resolving never to relax in his exertions, until Constance should be placed upon the throne of the Two Sicilies. He maintained a body of men as spies on the actions of Charles, and began cautiously to unfold his schemes, by letter, to a few chosen friends. He made but little progress at first, for Charles had carefully distributed his followers through the towns of Apulia and Calabria, and by severely punishing all the disaffected, and heaping rewards on those who joined his cause, the attachment to the memory of Manfred had been effectually crushed. This being the case, Procida turned his attention to Sicily, where he found a state of things more ripe for his purpose. The ministers to whom Charles had entrusted the government of the island were all Frenchmen, selected from his army, whose sole aim was to enrich themselves, caring not at what cost to the people; the Sicilians in consequence cordially hated their oppressors, and Giovanni entering the island in disguise, quickly induced some of the most powerful amongst the nobles to join in a conspiracy for



attacking and expelling the French, and proclaiming Peter and Constance sovereigns of Sicily. They agreed however to remain quiet until further aid could be procured, conscious that their own resources would not suffice against so formidable an antagonist. It occurred at once to Giovanni, that they might avail themselves of the dispute then existing between Pope Nicholas and Charles ; he remembered also that Paleologus, emperor of the East, was in hourly dread of an invasion from Charles, and that he might easily be won to take part in any enterprise which might divert his attention from an attack on Constantinople. In the disguise of a monk he repaired at once to Rome, where he found the pope most favourably inclined to the plans of the conspirators. In the same dress he continued his journey to Constantinople, and readily persuaded Paleologus to co-operate with them ; convincing him that the surest method of averting an attack from his own dominions was to advance money to Peter of Arragon, in furtherance of the Sicilian enterprise. Thus war being carried into the territories of Charles, he must of necessity abandon all idea of foreign conquest. The emperor willingly agreed to advance a sum of money, on condition that Peter would begin the expedition immediately, and with spirit. He despatched his private secretary with Giovanni to the court of Peter, entrusting the money to him, and at the same time commanding him to assure the Pope of his willingness to aid the cause. The two ambassadors landed at Malta, where



they were met by some of the conspirators from Sicily ; and after relating to them the prosperous state of their affairs, and re-animating their hopes, they proceeded to Rome. Nicholas listened to their project favorably ; he was alarmed at the increasing power of Charles, who had begun to treat the Papal see with great neglect, and readily agreed to assist the conspirators with money. He promised to give the Papal sanction to the enterprise, and to grant the investiture of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies to Peter. From Rome, Procida hastened to Arragon ; he found Peter timid, and wavering as to his part of the affair ; but when he was made clearly to understand that the emperor Paleologus, and the Pope, had shewn the sincerity of their offers of assistance by advancing large sums of money—that the Sicilians burned with impatience to throw off the French yoke—and that he need not appear in the undertaking until the conspiracy had actually burst forth, Peter's fears began to vanish. Procida found an able coadjutor in Constance, who entreated her husband not to allow so excellent an opportunity of avenging the death of her father and nephew to pass by ; urging upon him at the same time the advantage of annexing the crown of the Two Sicilies to that of Arragon. Peter at last yielded to all these arguments ; he speedily convoked an assembly of his nobles, who agreed forthwith to equip a fleet, under the pretence of making war upon the Saracens in Africa. The better to elude suspicion, it was ordered to steer for that country, hover about the coast, and be in readiness to set sail for Sicily if the conspiracy succeeded, or, in the event of a failure, to prosecute the avowed expedition against the Infidels.

During the arrangement of these preliminaries Pope Nicholas died, and a Frenchman, a partisan of Charles, was elected by his intrigues to fill the Papal chair, under the name of Martin IV. Giovanni, fearing that the ardour of Paleologus might cool, determined to return at once to Constantinople. Accompanied by the Emperor's secretary, he again assumed his monk's disguise, and crossed over to Sicily ; they here communicated with some of the leaders in the conspiracy, and confiding to them all that had been already done, implored them to keep a good heart and fear nothing from the death of Nicholas. Giovanni succeeded in impressing the secretary with the ardour of the Sicilians, and their firm resolve to die rather than longer to endure the tyranny of the French : thus he was enabled, from personal observation, to re-assure the Emperor, to whose court they immediately repaired. It is a singular

fact that, by the prudence of Procida, this conspiracy, carried on between so many and widely scattered nations for two years, was kept a secret from the crafty Charles.

Peter, though dismayed by the death of his ally Nicholas, did not abandon the enterprise. He sent ambassadors to the new pontiff, ostensibly to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, but really to sound his opinions on the claim of Constance to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies ; endeavouring to persuade the Pope that he desired to decide the question, not in the field of battle, but peacefully in the courts of the Holy College. Martin courteously thanked the ambassador for his visit, but added,—“ Tell your king to expect no favour from the apostolic seat until he has paid all the arrears of tax due from his predecessors and himself, as true vassals and feudatories of the Church.” Meanwhile Giovanni di Procida returned from Constantinople, and, under various disguises, traversed Sicily, exciting the conspirators to rebellion. By means of secret messengers he kept up a communication with Peter, and, as soon as he found that the fleet was ready to set sail, he fixed a day and hour for the insurrection to burst forth.

On the second day of Easter, in the month of March, 1282, when the vesper-bell tolled the hour of evening prayer throughout every part of Sicily, the people rushed out armed, and massacred all the French inhabitants of the island, without distinction of age or sex ; so blind was their rage and fury, that many Sicilian women and children, whose tender age might well have been their safeguard, were sacrificed in the tumult. The names of Peter and Constance resounded through the island ; in less than two hours eight thousand persons perished—none were spared : a few tried to escape and conceal themselves until the excitement should subside, but in vain ; the Sicilians pursued their victims until not a Frenchman remained in the island.

Thus ended “ The Sicilian Vespers,” which gave a death-blow to the power of Charles. He vainly endeavoured to regain the crown : disheartened by his losses, broken down by bodily disease, this usurper and tyrant ended his days in misery, surviving the Sicilian insurrection little more than two years.

THE HORSE-SHOE-NAIL.

From the German of M.M. Grimm.

A FARMER once went to market, and, meeting with good luck, he sold all his corn and lined his purse with silver and gold. Then he thought it time to return, in order to reach home before night-fall: so he packed his money-bags upon his horse's back and set out on his journey. At noon he stopped in a village to rest; and when he was starting again the hostler, as he led out the horse, said, "Please you, sir, the left shoe behind has lost a nail." "Let it go," answered the farmer; "the shoe will hold fast enough for the twenty miles that I have still to travel. I'm in haste." So saying, he journeyed on.

In the afternoon, the farmer stopped again to bait his horse; and as he was sitting in the inn the stable-boy came, and said, "Sir, your horse has lost a nail in his left shoe behind: shall I take him to the smithy?" "Let him alone," answered the farmer; I've only six miles further to go, and the horse will travel well enough that distance. I've no time to lose."

Away rode the farmer; but he had not gone far before the horse began to limp: it had not limped far, ere it began to stumble; and it had not stumbled long, before it fell down and broke a leg. Then the farmer was obliged to leave the horse lying in the road, to unstrap his bags, throw them over his shoulder, and make his way home on foot as well as he could, where he did not arrive till late at night. "All my ill-luck," said the farmer to himself, "comes from that cursed horse-shoe-nail!"

THE MONKEY.

A MONKEY got into the room of a rich miser, who never gave a farthing to the poor; and seeing a chest full of gold, he began flinging the sovereigns out at the window among the people, till there was not one left. The monkey had just finished his job when the old miser came home; and seeing what had been done, his rage was very great, and he would have killed the monkey on the spot, if he had not jumped away faster than he came in. A neighbour, hearing what had been done, said to the miser, "It was very foolish of the monkey, certainly, to throw the sovereigns out at the window; but it was still more foolish for you to keep them locked up in a chest, without making any good use of them."



THE FISHERMAN AND THE FLOUNDER.

From the German of the Brothers Grimm.

THERE was once a fisherman and his wife, who lived together in a wretched hovel, close to the sea, and every day he went to throw out his line; and this lasted for a long time.

One day as he sat on the shore watching his angle, and gazing right into the shining waters, something very weighty pulled the

line down deep beneath the surface, and when he succeeded in drawing it up again, behold, he had caught a large flounder!

Then the flounder said to him: "Prithee let me go—for I'm not a real flounder, but an enchanted prince; so put me back into the water, and let me swim away."

"You needn't say so many words about it," replied the man, "for any way I should let go a flounder that is able to speak."



So he set him back into the waters, and the flounder dived down to the bottom, leaving a long track of blood behind him.

The man then returned to his hovel, and told his wife how he had caught a flounder, who had told him he was an enchanted prince, upon which he had let him go his ways.

"And did you ask for nothing?" said the wife.

"No," said the husband: "what should I have asked for?"

"Ah!" replied she, "'tis so wretched to live in this dirty, narrow hovel! Now do go and ask for a nice cottage."

The fisherman did not much relish this, still he went to the sea-shore, and when he reached it the sea looked both green and yellow, and he stood beside the waters, and said:

" Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Quickly hither come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell."

The flounder then came swimming along, and said :

“ Well, what does she want ? ”

“ Alas ! ” replied the man, “ my wife says, that when I caught you I ought to have asked for a boon, for she doesn’t like to live any longer in our hovel, but wants a proper cottage.”

“ Go home,” replied the flounder; “ you will find her in it.”

So the man went home, and he found his wife standing at the door of a cottage, and she said to him : “ Come in, this is really something better than what we had before.”

And there was a room, a chamber, and a kitchen, and behind there was a little garden with all sorts of vegetables, and a farmyard with ducks and hens.

“ Oh, how contented we shall now be ! ” cried the fisherman.

“ Yes—we’ll endeavour to be so,” replied the woman.

A week, and then a fortnight had scarcely passed over their heads, when the wife said : “ Husband, this cottage is too small for me; the farmyard and garden are too small—I want to live in a fine large house. Go to the flounder, and ask him to get us a mansion.”

“ Wife, wife ! ” said the man, “ the flounder gave us the cottage, and I should not like to go back to him to ask for something more, for he might take it ill.”

“ Don’t tell me ! ” said the wife; “ he can do it well enough, and very willingly too, if you do but go and ask him.”

So the man went away with a heavy heart, and when he reached the sea-side the waters looked violet, grey, and dark blue; but they were quite smooth, so he walked up to them and said :

“ Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me ;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“ Why, what does she want ? ” said the flounder.

“ Alack ! ” replied the fisherman in deep sorrow, “ my wife wants to live in a stone house ! ”

“ Go home, and you will find her standing before the door,” said the flounder.

So the husband went back, and sure enough his wife was standing in front of a large palace.

“ See, goodman,” said she; “ this is something like ! ”

And hereupon they entered it together, and they found a number of servants, and the walls were all glittering; there was a golden chair and table in the room, and behind the castle was a garden, and

a wood about half a mile long, in which were stags, and deer, and hares ; while in the yard stood stables full of cows and horses.

“Now,” said the husband, “we’ll live in this fine castle, and be contented.”

“We will consider about that,” said the wife; “in the meantime we’ll consult our pillow.”

So they retired to rest.

On the following morning the wife woke up, and seeing it was broad day, she pushed her elbow into her husband’s side, saying : “Get up, husband, we ought to reign over the whole land.”

“But, wife,” said the husband, “what’s the use of reigning ? I’m sure I don’t wish to be king.”

“Well, then, I’ll be king,” answered she.

“O wife !” replied the husband, “how can you become king ? Surely the flounder won’t grant us that !”

“Husband,” rejoined she, “go straight to him, for I’m set upon being king.”

So the husband went away quite sad to think that his wife insisted on being king, and when he reached the sea the waves were of a blackish grey, and rolling up and down. So he stood on the shore saying :

“Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me ;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“Why, what does she want now ?” said the flounder.

“Alas !” sighed the man, “my wife wants to be king !”

“Go home, she is become so already,” said the flounder.

So the husband went home, and when he reached the palace he perceived a quantity of soldiers with trumpets and drums, and his wife was sitting on a lofty throne of gold, studded with diamonds, and wore a golden crown, and on each side of her stood a row of waiting-women, each one a head shorter than the other.

“Well,” said the husband, “so now you are king ?”

“Yes,” replied she ; “I’m king.”

And after he had gazed at her for awhile he said, “What a fine thing it is, wife, that you should be king ! Now we’ll wish for nothing more.”

“Nay, goodman,” said she, “this has lasted long enough—I can’t stand it any longer: I’m king, and now I choose to be emperor.”

"Alas, wife!" said the husband, "what is the use of being emperor?"

"Husband," said she, "go to the flounder; I will be emperor."

"But, wife," said the husband, "the flounder can't make you emperor, and I shouldn't like to ask him."

"I'm king," said the wife, "and you are my husband; so go at once as I tell you."

So the husband left her, and as he went his ways he said to himself: "This is going rather too far—it is too barefaced to ask to be emperor, and the flounder will finish by being angry."

With these words he reached the shore, and the waters were black and thick, and the wind was whistling with a shrill voice. He then approached the sea, and said,—

"Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell."

"Well! what does she want?" said the flounder.

"Alas!" cried he, "my wife wants to be emperor!"

"Go home," said the flounder; "she is emperor already."

The husband then went back, and on reaching home he found his wife sitting on a very lofty throne, that was made of a single piece of gold, and wearing on her head a large crown, that was at least two yards high, and on each side of her stood a row of satellites, one shorter than the other, from the tallest giant down to the tiniest dwarf, as short as my little finger. Before her stood princes and counts, and when her husband approached her he said: "So wife, now you are emperor?"

"Yes," replied she; "I'm emperor."

"O wife!" cried he as he looked at her, "what a fine thing it is that you should be emperor!"

"Husband," answered she, "don't stand idling there; now I am emperor, I want to be pope."

"Nay, wife," said the husband, "how can you think of wanting to be pope? You know there is only one pope in all Christendom."

"Husband," quoth she, "pope I must be; and this very day, too."

"Nay, wife," said he, "the flounder can't make a pope of you; so it will never do to ask him."

"Nonsense, husband!" replied she; "if he can make an emperor, he can make a pope: so go and see after it."

So the husband went, but his spirits flagged and his knees trembled, while the wind blew violently, and the waves were lashing the shore as when there is a shipwreck, and the billows were raging, and the sky was black, and a tempest seemed about to burst forth. And the fisherman was quite unnerved as he approached the water, and said,—

“ Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me ;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“ Why, what does she want now ? ” said the flounder.

“ Alas ! ” said the man, “ my wife has taken it into her head to want to be a pope ! ”

“ Go back,” said the flounder ; “ a pope you will find her.”

Then he went back, and on reaching home he found his wife sitting on a throne two miles high, with a triple crown upon her head, and around her stood a staff of the highest dignitaries of the church, and on each side of her was placed a row of wax-lights, the biggest of which was as thick as the largest tower, gradually dwindling down to a farthing rushlight.

“ Wife,” said the husband as he looked at her, “ so now you are a pope ? ”

“ Yes,” replied she ; “ I am pope.”

“ O wife,” said the husband, “ what a fine thing it is that you should be pope ! And now, wife, you’ll be contented ; for, being pope, you can’t get any higher.”

“ I shall think about that,” said the wife.

And then they retired to rest ; but she could not feel satisfied, and her ambition would not let her sleep, for she kept thinking what she should wish for next.

At length the sun rose. “ Ha ! ” thought she, as she watched it from the window, “ why should not I make the sun rise myself ? ”

Then she waxed wroth, and giving her husband a push, she said : “ Husband, go to the flounder, for I want to become Lord of the spheres.”

The husband, though still half asleep, was so frightened at this that he fell out of bed.

“ Wife, wife ! ” remonstrated he, “ think better of it, and be satisfied with remaining pope.”

“ No,” cried the wife, “ I cannot bear any longer to see the

sun and moon rise, and to think that I can't make them rise when I please. I want to be Lord of the spheres."

"Alas, wife!" said the fisherman, "the flounder cannot grant such a wish. He can make an emperor or a pope, but further his power can't go."

"Husband!" cried she in a rage, "I want to be equal to the Lord of the spheres: so go at once to the flounder."

The fisherman trembled in every limb, and there arose such a storm that the trees and the very rocks waved about, while the sky was one sheet of black, and it thundered and lightened; and the billows of the sea rose up as high as mountains, with each a crest of foam on their summit. He then said:

"Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell."

"What does she want next?" inquired the flounder.

"Alas!" faltered he, "she wants to be equal to the Lord of the spheres!"

"Go back to your hovel again!" cried the flounder.

And in their hovel sure enough are they still to this very day.

A RICH HEAD AND A POOR HEAD.

DURING the reign of the late King of Poland, a conspiracy was formed against him; by no means an uncommon occurrence in that unhappy country. One of the rebels, a Polish prince, forgot his duty to his sovereign so far as to set a price of 20,000 florins on the royal head. He had even the insolence to write to the King, informing him of the circumstance, with the idea of either vexing or frightening him. The King, however, sent him the following cool reply:—"I have received your letter, and beg to inform you that the perusal of it gave me exceeding pleasure, so glad was I to find that you valued my head at such a high price; I can assure you, that I should be very sorry to pay one farthing for yours."

ENIGMA IV.



THE summer sun has ceased to shed
 My first on garden hedgerows trim ;
 Its changing tints from earth have fled,
 The stars with dewy clouds are dim.
 Regardless of the evening's damp,
 Two lovers down the pathway stray ;
 I shew my ineffectual lamp
 To light them on their darkling way.



As in the lady's willing ear
 His ardent vows of true love speak,
 In lovelier tints doth reappear
 My first upon her blushing cheek.
 Confiding girl ! his vows beware,
 And let yon rose a warning yield ;
 Amid its leaves that bloom so fair
 My loathsome second's oft concealed.

Forsworn ? Once more with deeper dye
 My first, of shame and ire the token,
 Flushes her cheek, lights up her eye,
 Then leaves her pale, disgraced,
 heart-broken.
 Trampled in blood where war clouds
 roll,
 On battle-field the traitor lies ;
 While fiends exulting plunge his soul
 To where my second never dies !



FAIR ROSAMOND.

WHEN as King Henry ruled this land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queen, he dearly loved
A fair and comely dame.

Most peerless was her beauty found,
Her favour, and her face;
A sweeter creature in this world
Could never prince embrace.

Her crispèd locks like threads of gold
Appear'd to each man's sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like Orient pearls,
Did cast a heavenly light.

The blood within her crystal cheeks
Did such a colour drive,
As though the lily and the rose
For mastership did strive.

Yea, Rosamond, fair Rosamond,
Her name was callèd so,
To whom our queen, dame Eleanor,
Was known a deadly foe.

The king, therefore, for her defence
Against the furious queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
The like was never seen.

Most curiously that bower was built
Of stone and timber strong ;
An hundred and fifty doors
Did to this bower belong :

And they so cunningly contrived,
With turnings round about,
That none but with a clue of thread
Could enter in or out.

And for his love and lady's sake,
That was so fair and bright,
The keeping of this bow'r he gave
Unto a valiant knight.

But Fortune, that doth often frown
Where she before did smile ;
The king's delight and lady's joy
Full soon she did beguile :

For why ?—the king's ungracious son,
Whom he did high advance,
Against his father raised wars
Within the realm of France.

But yet, before our comely king
The English land forsook,
Of Rosamond, his lady fair,
His farewell thus he took :

“ My Rosamond, my only Rose,
That pleaseth best mine eye :
The fairest flower in all the world
To feed my fantasy :

The flower of mine affected heart,
Whose sweetness doth excel :
My royal Rose, a thousand times
I bid thee now farewell !

For I must leave my fairest flower,
My sweetest Rose, a space,
And cross the seas to famous France,
Proud rebels to abase.

But yet, my Rose, be sure thou shalt
My coming shortly see,
And in my heart, when hence I am,
I'll bear my Rose with me.”

When Rosamond, that lady bright,
Did hear the king say so,
The sorrow of her grieved heart
Her outward looks did show ;

And from her clear and crystal eyes
The tears gush'd out apace,
Which like the silver-pearl'd dew
Ran down her comely face.

Her lips, erst like the coral red,
Did wax both wan and pale,
And for the sorrow she conceived
Her vital spirits fail ;

And falling down all in a swoon
Before King Henry's face,
Full oft he in his princely arms
Her body did embrace :

And twenty times, with watery eyes,
He kiss'd her tender cheek,
Until he had revived again
Her senses mild and meek.

“ Why grieves my Rose, my sweetest
The king did often say. [Rose ?”
“ Because,” quoth she, “ to bloody wars
My lord must part away.

But since your grace to foreign coasts,
Among your foes unkind,
Must go to hazard life and limb,
Why should I stay behind ?

Nay, rather let me, like a page,
Your sword and target bear ;
That on my breast the blows may light,
Which would offend you there.

Or let me, in your royal tent,
Prepare your bed at night,
And with sweet baths refresh your grace
At your return from fight.

So I your presence may enjoy
No toil I will refuse :
But wanting you, my life is death ;
Nay, death I'd rather choose.”

“ Content thyself, my dearest love ;
 Thy rest at home shall be
 In England’s sweet and pleasant isle ;
 For travel fits not thee.

Fair ladies brook not bloody wars :
 Soft peace their sex delights ;
 ‘ Not rugged camps, but courtly bowers ;
 Gay feasts, not cruel fights.’

My Rose shall safely here abide,
 With music pass the day ;
 Whilst I, among the piercing pikes,
 My foes seek far away.

My Rose shall shine in pearl and gold,
 Whilst I’m in armour dight ;
 Gay galliards here my love shall dance
 Whilst I my foes go fight.

And you, Sir Thomas, whom I trust
 To be my love’s defence,
 Be careful of my gallant Rose
 When I am parted hence.”

And therewithal he fetch’d a sigh,
 As though his heart would break ;
 And Rosamond, for very grief,
 Not one plain word could speak.

And at their parting well they might
 In heart be grieved sore :
 After that day fair Rosamond
 The king did see no more.

For when his grace had pass’d the seas,
 And into France was gone,
 With envious heart Queen Eleanor
 To Woodstock came anon.

And forth she calls this trusty knight,
 In an unhappy hour ;
 Who with his clue of twinèd thread,
 Came from this famous bower.

And when that they had wounded him,
 The queen this thread did get,
 And went where Lady Rosamond
 Was like an angel set.

But when the queen with steadfast eye
 Beheld her beauteous face,
 She was amazèd in her mind
 At her exceeding grace.

“ Cast off from thee these robes,” she
 “ That rich and costly be ; [said,
 And drink thou up this deadly draught,
 Which I have brought to thee.”

Then presently upon her knees
 Sweet Rosamond did fall ;
 And pardon of the queen she craved
 For her offences all.

“ Take pity on my youthful years,”
 Fair Rosamond did cry ;
 “ And let me not with poison strong
 Enforcèd be to die.

I will renounce my sinful life,
 And in some cloister bide ;
 Or else be banish’d, if you please,
 To range the world so wide.

And for the fault which I have done,
 Though I was forced thereto,
 Preserve my life, and punish me
 As you think meet to do.”

And with these words, her lily hands
 She wrung full often there ;
 And down along her lovely face
 Did trickle many a tear.

But nothing could this furious queen
 Therewith appeasèd be ;
 The cup of deadly poison strong,
 As she knelt on her knee,

She gave this comely dame to drink ;
 Who took it in her hand,
 And from her bended knee arose,
 And on her feet did stand :

And casting up her eyes to heaven,
 She did for mercy call ;
 And drinking up the poison strong,
 Her life she lost withal.

And when that death through every limb
 Had shewn its greatest spite,
 Her chiefest foes did plain confess
 She was a glorious wight.

Her body then they did entomb,
 When life was fled away,
 At Godstow, near to Oxford town,
 As may be seen this day.



THE OAK.

From "The Woodland Companion," by Dr. Aikin.

THE oak stands at the head of British timber-trees, as well on account of its utility as of the grandeur and majesty of its figure. It arrives at a bulk equal, if not superior, to that of any other tree of the forest; and by the vast arms which it throws out on every side, it forms a mass which fills the eye of the spectator, and impresses him with gigantic ideas. Its rugged bark and jagged deep-green leaves add to its character of rustic and masculine strength.

The oak most delights in a rich, strong soil, in which it strikes its roots to a vast depth. It loves hilly rather than boggy ground, and thrives best in large plantations. It is injured by cropping; whence may be estimated the mischief annually done to this noble tree by the custom of cutting large branches for the celebration of the 29th of May. It forms the largest head, and spreads in the most picturesque figure, when growing singly, as in parks and ornamental grounds; but it rises with a tall and straight trunk only in woods and close plantations.

The uses of the oak-tree are very various, and comprehend almost every part of it. The acorns (which, in common with the nuts of other timber-trees, bear the name of *mast*) are said to have been one of the earliest foods of mankind; and in some of the warm climates they are still in use for that purpose. With us they are valued as the food of swine, of which large droves are sent

to fatten in the oak woods in this kingdom during some weeks in autumn, when the ripe acorns begin to fall. Squirrels and other small quadrupeds also partake of the repast, and lay up acorns for their winter store.

Every part of the oak abounds in an astringent juice, which is applied to various purposes. The bark is particularly valuable on this account, which renders it the chief material for tanning leather. Oaks growing in hedge-rows, which seldom arrive to the size of timber-trees, owe great part of their value to their bark. Before it is used it is ground to powder, and the infusion of it in water is by the tanners termed ooze. The small twigs, and even the leaves of the oak, may be applied to a similar purpose. Galls, which are an excrescence formed in the warm countries upon the leaves of a species of oak by means of an insect, are some of the strongest astringents known, and are much used in dyeing, on account of their property of striking a deep black, with the addition of vitriol of iron. The oak-apples (as they are improperly called), formed in the same manner upon our trees, possess a similar property, in a smaller degree. Oak saw-dust is the principal material used in dying fustians. It gives all the varieties of drab colours and shades of brown, accordingly as it is managed and compounded.

But it is by the use of its wood that the oak has acquired its chief fame, and especially for the important purpose of ship-building. This has made it so peculiarly the favourite of England, to whose naval glory it is supposed materially to have contributed. Thus Pope, in "Windsor Forest," speaking of vegetable treasure, says,—

" Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber and the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn."

Oak-timber is fitted for this purpose by its strength and durability, and also by the property of not readily splintering,—a circumstance of much consequence since the invention of cannon. Ships of war, therefore, if not entirely built of oak (which from the present scarcity of that timber is seldom done) have always their sides planked with it. The crooked pieces of this wood, procured from the bend of the branches, are also used for the *knees*, by which the planks are held out and supported. Oak-timber is likewise preferred for many other services of strength. In house-building it is used for door and window-frames, and for wall plates. When more plentiful, floors and staircases were also made of it.

In machinery, no other wood is equal to it where a great stress is to be borne; as in mill-work, steam-engines, and the like. It is used for the bodies of carts and waggons, also for gates, posts, and ladders. In the country it is a common material for furniture, such as tables, bedsteads, and chests of drawers; its durability being thought a compensation for the difficulty of working it. The coopers employ it for their largest vessels, and for well-buckets and water-pails.

The oak may be termed not less the poet's tree than the artisan's. Some of the first poets, ancient and modern, have chosen it as an object either of direct description or of simile; and that, not only in its flourishing state, but in its decay. Spenser has given a fable of the Oak and the Briar, in his "Shepherd's Calendar," which, as being of true English growth, I shall copy:—

"There grew an aged tree on the green,
A goodly oak sometime had it been,
With arms full strong and largely display'd,
But of their leaves they were disarray'd:
The body big and mightily pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wondrous height,
Whylom had been the king of the field,
And mochel mast to the husband did yield,
And with his nuts larded many swine;
But now the grey moss marr'd his rine,
His bared boughs were beaten with storms,
His top was bald and wasted with worms,
His honour decay'd, his branches sere."—*February.*

A more exact visible representation of the same object cannot be given, than by the figure of the old oak of Cowthorpe, Yorkshire, which measures sixteen yards in circumference within three feet of the ground, in Dr. Hunter's edition of Evelyn's "Sylva."



THE MONTH OF JULY.—ANGLING.

By Mary Roberts.

IZAAC WALTON tells us that the pleasant art of angling is somewhat like poetry—a thing not to be acquired, but rather natural to the mind; and that he who desires to be a good angler must possess both hope and patience. Therefore, playmates, let us sit awhile on this green bank, that our pulses may beat less quickly, and our minds possess somewhat of that quietness which Master Walton so much commends.

How calmly glides the deep clear river, now winding through a narrow channel with noble trees on either side, flinging their broad shadows on its tranquil waters; now emerging in its fulness and sweeping onward with a broad and ample current! Methinks it is not strange that boys should like to pass whole hours on the margin of such a river, not dreaming of their lessons, but calmly intent upon their quiet labours; for the mind must have an object, and the ardent youth who thus sits on the flower-dotted bank, with a long angling rod, could not brook the waste of unemployed time.

It is very pleasant to rest here, to feel the soft fresh air, and hear the cheerful hum of the industrious bee, gathering her honey-harvest among the wild thyme. Surely she teaches us a lesson that we may do well to follow. And now that we are cool and quiet let us begin the business of the day, each one choosing what part of the river he likes best for fishing; and let us make this green bank our place of meeting.

Well, here we are again with line and basket. Some of my playmates have been unsuccessful. Never mind, we shall do better another day. But Ernest and Augustus come with smiling faces and heavy loads. What have you got? A chub, a salmon, and plenty of trout. My old master, he who first taught me to love Virgil, used to say that a salmon was the king of fresh-water fish. He took me with him on a fishing excursion through North Wales, and we angled in the glorious lake of Llanberris, with a magnificent brotherhood of rocks grouping around and casting their broad shadows on the water, while the beams of the rising sun, silently and yet irresistibly, seemed to motion them to withdraw, till the whole surface of the lake rippled and sparkled with a brightness on which the eye could hardly rest. We soon filled our baskets, and then went on to the meeting of the Blue Pools; from thence to the river Gwynan, wandering with a loud sound through the romantic village of Bethgellert, where, tradition says, Llewellyn had a palace,

and poor Gellert, his faithful dog, lies beneath four grey stones, in a meadow near the river. We explored the whole neighbourhood and sought out the haunts of the ancient bards, for, like Klopstock, my master never lost the freshness of his feelings. He loved all young people, and we loved him in return.

And much that good old man would tell concerning the migrations of the salmon. "They set forth," he said, "from their haunts in all seas, whether belonging to the arctic or equatorial regions, and proceed with the utmost regularity. Ay, boys," he would add, with an arch smile, "if you need an example of order and obedience to your mothers, take it from the salmon. Foremost of the migratory bands proceeds a full-grown matron, with a steady, yet rapid motion, followed by others of the same kind, two and two. Each pair in advance of those behind, from three to six feet. To these succeed the older members of the community; and last of all, the young fry, two and two, are frisking hither and thither,—no striving to get a-head of their mothers, no pushing among their superiors in age. Poets speak concerning the return of wandering birds, and associate with them the opening of flowers and the leafing of forest trees, but not less wonderful are the migrations of the finny tribes, and the peculiar provision which they make for their young. A solitary fish remains to guard the infant prodigy till sufficiently grown, when she returns with them to the sea. Thus wandering up the beds of rivers in order to deposit their eggs on the soft sand, myriads of the salmon genus diffuse plenty through the most inhospitable regions; and the periods of their arrival are so accurately defined, that the inhabitants designate their months by the names of different species. Strong winds sweeping along the cold and woodless shores, serve also an important purpose; they drive before them such whirlwinds of sand that the entrances into inland lakes are blocked up, and hence considerable numbers are detained. When, however, spring commences, and the inhabitants depend no longer on their rivers for support, the winds uniformly change, they scatter the sandy barriers, and the prisoners escape."

Thus did our master teach us while resting beside many a rapid stream, and I loved to treasure up his words. "Let us," he would often say, "seek to obtain knowledge concerning the wonders by which we are surrounded. You, my boys, will find such knowledge useful as you journey along the path of life; and I, an aged man, whose wanderings are well-nigh over, can find much pleasure in the memory of the past."



THE WINE-MAKERS.

• (*Translated from the German by Alfred Sothorn.*)

ONCE upon a time there lived two children, named Kardel and Michel. Now Kardel was quite a stupid little thing, and it must be confessed that Michel was not over-clever. One day the children saw their mother drinking some wine.

“Mother,” said Kardel, “from what cow have you milked that wine?”

“ You little stupid thing!” said his mother; “ wine does not come from the cow, but from the vine.”

Michel shook his head, and said gravely, "Nay, mother, I have been for the last half-hour lying under the vine, and I watched the berries continually, and although I kept my mouth open, as I always do, no wine ran into it."

"Ah!" sighed his mother; and then she said, "Why, you stupid head, the wine must be made! First cut a bunch of grapes from the vine, and having done so, squeeze it with your foot; then let the juice stand, and when, after a month's time, you look at it, you will find it to be clear wine."

A month after this, on a rainy day, the children came to their mother with a glass full of dirty rain water.

"And what is that for?" asked the mother.

"Wine," answered Michel, and laughed out of all countenance.

"Do not talk so foolishly!" scolded the mother. "Is wine to be put into that dirty stuff?"

"Oh, surely!" simpered little Kardel. "Only it is not so clear as that which you drink. Remember, mother, a month ago you told us how wine was made, and we have made it exactly as you said. We went first to the vine-dresser, who cut us a bunch of grapes, and having trodden them under our feet, we let the juice stand, and on looking at it to-day, we found this wine exactly on the same spot where we had squeezed the grapes a month before."

"Ah!" sighed the mother, "that little Michel should have such little sense, and that Kardel should be such a stupid thing!"

In another story you shall hear still more of the clever things which little Kardel and Michel did.



“DEAR SPECKLE-BACK.”

By *Miss Sheridan Carey.*

WITHIN an antique garden's bound
Where silver fountains play'd,
And flowers and trees begirt the paths
With beauty and with shade;

While here and there, thro' branch and
Bright Summer glory shed, [bole
A noble lady spoke her child,
And gently stroked its head:

“ Oh, Florence! my beloved babe!
Throughout thy tender youth
Keep nothing from thy mother's ear,
And ever speak the truth;

For, lo! it is a thing that doth
Displease the Lord on high,
When children venture to deceive,
And shun their parent's eye:

And e'er the disobedient one
Provokes his holy ire;
And anger from above, consumes
As with a flaming fire:

Now cherish this deep in thine heart,
And list while I relate
How one concealment wrought, at length,
An infant's hapless fate.

I knew a little orphan girl,
An orphan from her birth,
Whose parents in the churchyard lay,
Beneath the mould'ring earth:

She was a fair and winning child,
With eyes of azure blue,
And sun-bright locks that on the breeze
Like silken meshes flew;

Her budding cheek in softest bloom
The blushing rose array'd,
And when she laugh'd her ruby lips
Small ocean pearls display'd.

No kinsman nor no kinsman's friend
Could this poor baby claim,
And food and maintenance it owed
Unto an ancient dame:

And very lovely 'twas indeed
The little lamb to see,
At book, at work, at play, at prayer,
Beside the grandame's knee:

And oft the aged woman thank'd,
In tears, the Lord above,
That in her lonely years He gave
Her something still to love.

Thus, fondly rear'd, the nursling grew
And flourish'd like a flower
Sown in a genial spot, and fed
By many a soothing shower;

Three years had glided o'er her head
Like one long summer day,
When sickness smote her rev'rend friend
And chased her strength away:

In bed for many a weary month
The feeble suff'rer pined,
Yet daily dwelt upon The Word,
To Heav'n's decree resigned.

Now Florence, love; in early times
The Lord with bounteous grace,
Had prosper'd all the widow's ways,
And bless'd her dwelling-place;

Enough she had for ev'ry need,
Some trifle, too, to spare,
And Want beneath her lowly roof
Ne'er domiciled with Care:

Behind her cot a garden lay,
Fenced round by birchen trees,
And rich with herbs, and roots, and
And many a hive of bees; [flow'rs,

A dial, old and ivy-wreath'd,
Time's noiseless flight display'd;
And, sown with tufts of silver bells,
A brook sweet music made;

And in this green and sunny nook,
When summer noons were fine,
Beneath a goody maple tree
The grandame used to dine.

New cheese and milk, and wheaten
On snow-white linen placed, [cakes,
With pulse and fruits and honeycomb
The board abundant graced;

'Twas here (forbade the fever'd room)
The gleesome Alice play'd,
Her primer conn'd, her worsted wound,
Her little kerchief made;

But ever at its waking hour
The loving infant crept,
On tiptoe, from its cradle nest,
To where the matron slept;

And, silent, looked with troubled mien
Upon that alter'd face, [arms
Then sought within those outstretch'd
Its cherish'd hiding-place.

And when the sun, midst clouds of gold,
Sank in the glorious west,
One moment more 'twas fondly snatch'd
Unto that yearning breast.

Now oftentimes as the widow dwelt
On that dear baby's face,
She fancied pining sickness prey'd
Upon its roseate grace.

And then, with keen alarms disturb'd,
She sent it from her side,
And would the chamber's heated air
With nervous tremor chide.

One morning, duly, to her couch
The treasured charge was led,
With piercing glance the widow gaz'd,
Then started up in bed.

Pale was the little shrunken cheek,
And dim the drooping eye,
'Oh, God!' the aged woman gasp'd
'My precious lamb will die!'

She felt its tiny arms—to her
They seem'd all worn and thin;
She look'd into its eyes—there danced
No joyous light within.

No reason could the nurse assign
For this sore, grievous change,
'The child was fed, and tended too,
(In truth 'twas passing strange!)

And for the health-bestowing breeze
The cottage hearth forsook,
And ever in the garden ground
Its daily food partook.'

This nurse, a poor but righteous dame,
Who fear'd God's holy word,
Had but to speak to gain belief
For all that she aver'd.

'Haste! help me forth, and seat me in
My good old easy-chair,
'Twould brace my languid heart again
To breathe the blessed air;

Nay! thwart me not, my friend, I pray!
Please Heaven! I would be well;
For sure there hangs about my babe
Some drear, unholy spell!'

Now by her cheery hearth once more
That ancient dame was seen,
In coif and pinner white array'd,
With venerable mien.

The matin meal was straight prepared,
With pious thanks prefaced,
And then before the restless child,
Its bread and milk were placed;

With eager grasp and bright'ning brow
It took its bidden store,
Glanced round awhile, then quiet stole
Forth through the open door:

The grandame rose: 'Methinks 'tis
My darling thus should flee! [strange
I like it not!—God give me strength!
Oh, Mary, come with me!'

With weak but hurried step she trod,
The babe outstripp'd the wind,
With little porringer in hand,
Nor ever look'd behind:

It reached the bed of purple thyme,
Yet made no stop or stay,
The turf-en seat, the maple shade,
But still went on its way;

And now quite at the garden's verge
With flow'ring shrubs o'erspread,
It pull'd the stem aside, and through
The fragrant covert sped.



All smitten with a deep amaze,
The trembling dames drew nigh,
And, shelter'd by the verdant fence,
Beheld with curious eye

A sylvan glade o'er-knit with trees,
Amidst whose branches peer'd
Blue glimpses of the summer sky,
By flitting sunbeam cheer'd;

The merry birds upon the boughs
Their trilling matins sung,
And every blade, and leaf, and thorn,
With beady dew was hung:

But nothing did the elders heed
The wood-lark's song to hear,
For on that elfin spot they gazed
With wonder and with fear;

There, seated on the tender grass,
They mark'd their wayward pet,
And by its side its porringer
And little platter set.

Now once and twice the fondling rapp'd
With spoon upon the ground;
A noise was heard far in the brake,
And then a rustling sound;

And lo! with many a spiral fold,
Did from the coppice glide
A serpent, dazzlingly attir'd
In beauty and in pride;

Its glossy skin of green and gold,
With silver interlaced,
Seem'd studded with ten thousand gems
By cunning fancy placed;

And as it raised its jewell'd head
Full haughtily on high,
No Indian stone could match the light
Flash'd from that em'rald eye.

With wondrous gambolling it crept
Straight to the infant's feet,
And, fawning, joyously appear'd
Its visitor to greet.

And pleasure did the nursling child
All touchingly reveal,
While with the gentle snake it toy'd
And halved its little meal:

On this side of the porringer
The bonny lambkin sat,
And, lapping up its given share,
The serpent lay on that.

So lovingly blithe Alice fed
With her strange-chosen mate,
But ever, as the creature sought
To pilfer from the plate,

She softly tapp'd it on the head
And, lispingly, did chide,
'Fie! Spebble-bat! dear Spebble-bat!
Teep on de other thide!'^*

In silence both the women watch'd
To mark how all would end,
And, lost in wonder, knew not what
The omen might portend.

Well, soon between the babe and snake
The porringer was clear'd,
And gladden'd by the social meal
The beauteous worm appear'd.

In many a sportive wreath it coil'd
Upon the fragrant moss;
Now like a di'mond arrow threw
Its taper length across;

Now, twisting to some poplar twig,
Swung lithely to and fro;
Now vaulted through the liquid air,
Now, diving, hid below:

And round and round, and here and there
It wheel'd and leap'd and spun,
Now gleaming in the leafy shade,
Now glitt'ring in the sun.

All this the little Alice view'd
With many a frolic smile,
And clapp'd her tiny hands and crow'd
With very joy the while.

* "Fie, Spebble-back! dear Spebble-back!
Keep on the other side!"

So wild and wilder wax'd the mirth
Of that fantastic guest,
As though its gratitude should be
With anticfeat expest;

Till, frenzy-wrought, it made a spring,
As flashing meteor quick,
And twining round the fearless babe,
Its face began to lick;

Now terror-struck the aged dame,
Scarce conquer'd from the first,
And shrieking loudly, through the hedge
With sudden strength she burst.

Away, away, like lightning swift
The startled reptile flew,
And in the tangled thicket's depth
Was, instant, lost to view;

Nor ever paused the troubled dame
Till, tremblingly, she bore
Her darling child, clasp'd in her arms,
Safe to her cottage door.

She wildly sought for scathe or wound
With agony distrest,
And on its tender face and limbs
Ten thousand kisses prest:

But not the slightest scratch appear'd,
No trace of hurt was seen;
And oft she glorified the Lord
That snake had harmless been.

But, mark me well! from that day forth
The infant pined away,
And, ere the summer leaves decay'd,
A stricken corpse it lay:

And oft before it died it smiled,
And in delirium cried—
'Fie! Spettle-bat! dear Spettle-bat!
Teep on de other thide!'

Now in its early coffin laid,
In little night-clothes drest,
So placid, pale, and pure, it seem'd
But newly rock'd to rest.

And varied rumours crept abroad
Of its mysterious death,
And people shook their heads and blamed
The serpent's blighting breath.

Well! 'twas the heart-wrung mourner's
At closing of the day, [wont,
To seek the chamber of the dead,
And there to watch and pray.

One eve the mellow harvest-moon
Shone o'er the tree-tops bright,
When to the stilly room she stole,
But shrunk aghast with fright,

There, nestled by the infant's cheek,
A famish'd serpent lay—
The same that in the forest glade
Once used to feed and play:

All stiff and motionless, it look'd
A form hewn out in stone;
And faded were its glorious hues,
In death for ever flown!

The marvel flew the country o'er,
And fill'd it with amaze,
And on the wondrous Indian snake
Lo! many came to gaze.

And some with pity mused upon
That wasted, perish'd thing,
Whose fangless jaws full plainly told
Thence could no venom spring;

All lifted up their hands and eyes,
But nobody could say
To whom the hapless snake belonged,
Nor whence it chanced to stray.

So buried was the victim-babe
Within the churchyard lone,
And o'er the hallow'd spot was raised
A monumental stone,

On which wee Alice and the snake,
Fair graven, were descried,
With 'Spettle-bat! dear Spettle-bat!
Teep on de other thide!'

And never from the burial day
The grey-hair'd woman smiled,
But, habited in sable weeds,
Sat, sorrowing for her child;

And morn and eve, throughout the year,
A sadd'ning vigil kept,
And sought the little grave, and there
Bow'd down her head and wept."



THE ELM.

From "The Woodland Companion," by Dr. Aikin.

THE common elm is a large timber-tree of great beauty and use. It grows to a great height, and at the same time, if permitted, throws out expanded arms, so as to cover a large extent with its shade. Hence it is often planted singly or a few together in village greens, where it affords both a majestic object and a pleasant summer shelter. The elm is, however, often seen trained to a vast height with a single naked trunk, which mode of rearing destroys its beauty, though it better fits it for a particular use. In this state it is very common in hedge-rows, especially in the neighbourhood of London. Elms are not frequent in woods or forests, but are generally planted in avenues or in other artificial situations. The diversity in the form and site of elms is agreeably sketched by

Cowper, the poet, who, of all others, viewed natural objects with most taste and correctness. He first mentions them as growing by the river's side.

"There, fast rooted in his bank
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut."—*Task*, b. i.

Then they are seen encircling a cottage upon a hill.

" 'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch."—*Ibid.*

He also notices its hue, as of a deeper green than the ash.

The elm best loves an open situation and a black clayey soil. It bears transplantation well. It does not injure the grass beneath it; and its leaves are agreeable to cattle, and in some countries constitute a considerable part of their food. The ancients made great use of elms properly trimmed as props or supports for their vines; and the poets frequently allude to the *marriage* of these dissimilar plants, and the aid derived to the weak and fruitful vine by twining round the strong stem of her husband elm.

The wood of the elm is hard and tough, and useful for a variety of purposes. It is particularly serviceable for occasions which require its being kept constantly wet, as in the keels and planking beneath the water-line of ships, mill-wheels and water-works. It is likewise used for axle-trees, naves, gate-posts and rails, floors, dressers, blocks, &c. and it is very fit for the carved and ornamental works belonging to architecture.

There are several varieties of the elm, differing in the roughness and smoothness of their leaves, and manner of growth. A dwarf kind is employed for making tall hedges in gardens, or nursery grounds.





HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle.

No. II.—THE LOMBARDS.

AMONG the various nations who contributed to the overthrow of the Roman empire, the Lombards were perhaps the people who did most to repair the evils which had arisen to Italy from the successive inroads of the northern hordes. The Allemanni, a tribe of Germans who dwelt between the Oder and the Danube, were the

first to penetrate into Italy. These barbarians were astonished and delighted with the beauty and fertility of the country ; dwelling themselves in a northern region, where the cold was excessive, in the midst of wild, trackless forests, and swampy, uncultivated plains, they regarded Italy as a kind of Paradise, with its rich fields, luxuriant vegetation, bright and cloudless sky, and warm sunny atmosphere. The beautiful cities, enriched with edifices of Roman magnificence, baths, circuses, amphitheatres, and temples, dazzled and bewildered these Northerns ; who, when they returned to their native country and related their tales of wonder, spread amongst their brethren and comrades a desire to go themselves and visit this land of enchantment. The love of war was the strongest feeling in the breast of the barbarians, and they eagerly seized on the hope of conquering this beautiful country. One by one the nations of the north descended into Italy, spreading ruin and terror around ; already had the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and many other tribes, joined in the work of destruction ; rushing down from the Alps like a torrent, they drove the affrighted natives before them, plundered cities, destroyed the noble buildings which adorned them, desolated the country, and then retired, giving place to fresh hordes of invaders. Italy fell a victim to these ruthless tribes, and at the time of which I now propose to write, this once fertile and beautiful country presented a scene of misery and desolation which can scarcely be imagined. The empire of Rome was overthrown, A.D. 476, by Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, who proclaimed himself King of Italy. Theodoric, an Ostrogoth, subsequently usurped the sceptre, A.D. 493, and by the introduction of wise and salutary laws, and his encouragement of agriculture and maintenance of peace, revived the fainting hopes of his subjects. Italy, after his death, was subdued by the arms of Justinian, emperor of the East, and remained for many years under the government of ministers appointed by him. One of these, Narses, having been treated with the cruellest ingratitude by the emperor, in revenge invited the Lombards to invade Italy, promising to yield it up to them on their first appearance—an offer too tempting to be rejected by this ambitious and warlike people.

But who were these Lombards ? Listen, and I will tell you a story of them, and of their king Alboin—of their strange manners and customs, of their cruelties and their virtues ; and from this you will see how widely barbarian life differed from that of civilised nations.

The Lombards, or Longobardi (as they were called from their long beards), came originally from the north of Germany, near the Elbe; by degrees they migrated southwards, and fixed their temporary residence in Pannonia, a province to the north-east of Italy. Alboin, while still a boy, killed in battle the son of Turisund, the king of the Gepidæ, who was the mortal enemy of the Lombard nation. His youth had hitherto excluded him from joining in the banquets given by the chiefs in honour of the victories obtained over their enemies; none being allowed to join in these festivities until they had been invested with their arms by the hand of a stranger king. Alboin, elated by recent victory and the death of his youthful antagonist, entered his father's tent, and prepared to take his seat amongst the warriors, when he was sternly reprimanded by his father and desired to withdraw. Stung to the quick at this public rebuke, he mounted his horse, and riding to the camp of the Gepidæ, presented himself before the king, who was overwhelmed with grief at the death of his son. With the blood of the child still warm upon his hands, Alboin claimed the rights of hospitality from the heart-stricken parent; and so sacred were these esteemed among barbarians, that Turisund, stifling his own emotions, received him courteously, placed him beside himself in the vacant chair of his murdered son, and pledged him in the wine-cup. During the repast, Cunimund, the brother of the slain, roused by the presence of so bitter an enemy, and inflamed with wine, insulted the dauntless young Lombard. Swords flashed from their scabbards, and blood would soon have flowed, but for the interference of the king, who with calm dignity commanded silence, and claimed for his guest the protection to which his position as a stranger at their board entitled him; with his own hand he invested him with the arms which had belonged to his son, and dismissed him with every mark of honour.

This act gained for Alboin the applause of his nation, and on his return he was hailed with shouts, and received as a conqueror; to us it can only appear a cruel and wanton insult offered to an aged man, whose grey hairs and sorrow at least entitled him to respect. During his short sojourn in the enemy's camp, Alboin had fallen violently in love with Rosamund, the daughter of Cunimund, and determined at any cost to gain her for his wife. By the death of his father Alboin had become king, and proceeded in due form to make proposals for the hand of Rosamund; these were spurned with indignation, the fair princess scorning to ally herself with the enemy of her country and the murderer of her uncle. Alboin, how-

ever, was not thus to be diverted from his purpose ; his peaceful overtures being rejected, he renewed the war with the Gepidæ, which had been suspended ; his arms were successful—with his own hand he slew Cunimund, and compelled the wretched Rosamund to become his reluctant bride. The scull of his vanquished foe was, according to the custom of the Lombards, converted into a drinking-cup and carefully preserved amongst the regal treasures, which were produced on occasions of great festivity.

Soon after this ill-fated marriage, Alboin, at the invitation of the treacherous Narses, descended into Italy. His progress there was triumphant ; those fair plains, still known by the name of Lombardy, yielded to this new invasion, almost without a struggle. Pavia alone offered a brave resistance to his arms ; for



three years it defended itself against the Lombards, until Alboin, exasperated by the protracted contest, swore an oath to massacre all the inhabitants as soon as they should fall into his power. Famine at length drove the city to despair, and the wretched people opened their gates to the victors. Alboin, breathing vengeance, rode at the head of his impatient troops to take possession of the city ; at the moment of passing beneath the gate, his horse became restive, stumbled, and nearly threw his rider. The incident impressed his mind deeply ; in the moment of triumph death had suddenly threatened him ; and, musing on the uncertainty of human events, the heart of Alboin was softened, and in gratitude for his preservation he not

only spared the brave people of Pavia, but fixed his regal court there.

Rosamund had long writhed under her compulsory marriage, and sought with impatience an opportunity to avenge her wrongs; nor was it long delayed. Alboin, grown weary of a wife who hated and shunned him, lost no opportunity of insulting her. One night in the midst of a carousal, when wine had flowed abundantly and all were plunged in intoxication, Alboin, excited to madness, commanded his attendants to bring the scull of Cunimund, and having filled it to the brim with rich Falernian wine, drained it at a draught; then replenishing the fearful bowl, he ordered his cup-bearer to take it to Rosamund, and "bid her rejoice with her father." The queen stood aghast at the command; but, controlling her horror, she received the goblet with a shudder. "Let the will of my lord be fulfilled!" she said, touching it with her lips, but internally swearing at the moment that the insult should be repaid with the life-blood of the king. Her threat was speedily executed, and Alboin fell beneath the daggers of assassins employed by his wronged but guilty wife.

No sooner were the Lombards established in Italy than they began to improve the country: the lands so long neglected or desolated by war were once more brought into cultivation; peace was restored, and with it some degree of prosperity. One of their kings wisely summoned his nobles around him, and with their assistance framed a code of laws. Under the administration of the Lombards the north of Italy remained until the time of Charlemagne.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD.

From the Latin of Milton.

"A peasant to his lord paid yearly court,
Presenting pippins of so rich a sort,
That he, displeased to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, withered, and would yield no more.
The squire, perceiving all his labour void,
Cursed his own pains, so foolishly employed;
And 'Oh!' he cried, 'that I had lived content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
My avarice has expensive proved to me,
And cost me both my pippins and my tree.'—COWPER.



NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

No. I.—VULTURES.

BIRDS which feed on flesh, or eat other birds, small quadrupeds, reptiles, and offal of various kinds, are called Birds of Prey, and form two sets, or groups—those which feed by day, and those which get their living by night: the first are called in English Diurnal, and the second Nocturnal, from the Latin words signifying day and night. All have four toes, strong talons, thick legs and thighs, sharply pointed and crook'd beaks, with a skin which covers the upper part, in which the nostrils are pierced, and which is sometimes coloured. They all have large, powerful wings, fly rapidly, and to great distances at one flight; and are among birds, what lions and tigers are among beasts.

Vultures are diurnal birds of prey, and, with one exception, have a part or the whole of the head and neck deprived of feathers; and these naked portions are often brilliantly coloured. Their beaks are crook'd at the end only, and are much more powerful than their claws, so that they chiefly tear their food with them; their feathers are strong, and closely set together; and their wings are so long, that when the bird walks it is obliged to spread them out, which makes it roll about in the most awkward and ludicrous manner. Like other birds of long flight, the breast-bone of vul-

tures is very large, and their merry-thought semicircular, both of which support their strong wings. Their sense of smell is very powerful, and they are able to scent their prey at a great distance; they hover round it for some time, making circles in the air; and when their brilliant eyes, which see things very far off, assure them that no enemy is near, they pounce upon it, and eat till they are so full that they can scarcely fly away. They often sit in a stupid state, so nearly approaching to insensibility, that they may be easily knocked down without making any resistance. If this were not a provision made for them by their all-wise Creator, we might be inclined to call them greedy; but they eat in this manner because they do not have opportunities of feeding often, and are obliged to swallow a quantity at one time, to supply their bodies with the necessary nourishment: an observation which may be applied to beasts as well as birds of prey.

Another propensity of vultures might be apt to make us call them disgusting birds, were it not that such habits were most valuable to human beings, in climates where the sun so soon causes every thing to become putrid—they eat all which is rotten and offensive that belongs to animal substances, and are often, in consequence, called the scavengers of the earth. They, however, were for this considered as blessings in ancient times, and were worshipped accordingly. Many have been found embalmed in the tombs of Egypt; but that practice was discontinued when the Mahometans became masters of the country, who only encourage them for the good they do in removing what is unwholesome.

Vultures are found in Asia, Africa, America, and the South of Europe. The largest of all is the Condor, which lives at a greater height than any other bird; for it places its habitation on the crests of the rocky mountains of that lofty chain in the New World called the Andes, immediately below the part where the snow never melts, more than four thousand eight hundred yards above the sea. It frequently measures above four yards from the tip of one wing to that of the other, when spread out; and the natives of the countries which it frequents have a peculiar cry, which always makes these birds display their enormous wings. Several condors will assemble together and attack and kill oxen, which has led to the story that they carry them off, which is impossible: but they really do take away kids, fawns, lambs, young lamas, and other weak animals, which several other vultures can also accomplish.

The King of the Vultures is a beautiful creature; the naked

parts of its head and neck are most exquisitely tinted with red and yellow ; its fleshy crest is red like that of a cock, and it has a ruff of soft feathers round that part of the neck where the plumage begins : it is about the size of a large turkey, but its body is of a longer shape.

A vulture lives among the Alps which is the terror of the inhabitants, as it is very voracious, and has been known to attempt to carry away little children ; it builds its nest in the highest and steepest rocks, and is the largest bird of prey in Europe. Its head is covered with feathers, and forms the exception we have already mentioned ; it has a tuft of bristles over each nostril and under its beak, and holds its wings half open when asleep. It has a cunning method of frightening animals which feed at great heights, such as goats and chamois, till they, in running away from it, fall over a precipice and are killed, and then it devours their carcases.

There is an old story among the fables of ancient Greece about a man called Prometheus, who is said to have ridiculed the heathen gods and goddesses of those times, and to have been so crafty and clever that he even deceived Jupiter. He made a man of clay, and gave him life by fire stolen from heaven, which he carried back to earth in a reed hidden in his bosom, and which so enraged the king of the gods that he desired Vulcan to make a woman in the same manner ; and the other heathen deities then gave her all the beauties and accomplishments which a mortal could possess : but besides these, Jupiter placed in her hands a box full of all the evils and vices of which mankind can be guilty, with orders to open it and let them out when Prometheus should marry her. Prometheus, however, knew better than to fall in love with this Pandora, as she was called, and she married his brother ; which put Jupiter into such a passion, that he caused Prometheus to be carried to Mount Caucasus and there chained to a rock, where a vulture was to feed upon his liver for thirty thousand years ; and yet, though always devoured, the liver was never to diminish. Prometheus, however, was released in thirty years by Hercules, who killed the vulture.

The great poet, Homer, in his "Iliad," makes Apollo and Minerva witness the single combat between the heroes Hector and Ajax, in the form of vultures :—

" Above them all

Exalted, Pallas and Apollo, pleased
Spectators both ; but, vulture-like in form,
Perch'd on the branches of the sacred beech."

COWPER'S *Homer's Iliad*, 6th Book.

*Saddler Müller's Wendel,*

SADDLER MÜLLER'S WENDEL.

By Mary Howitt.

PART I.—CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE final preparations for Christmas were made at Heinrich Müller's, the saddler's, who lived in the Hauptstrasse or high-street. The Christmas-tree was set up in the parlour behind the shop..

For days and days, nay, for weeks and months, the mother had been making preparations for this day, and the father had plentifully supplied the money. There were not in all the town merrier or heartier people than Saddler Müller and his family. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and his three boys, Fritz, Heinrich, and Wendel, or little Wendel, as he was always called. The ages of these boys were twelve, ten, and eight. All the town spoke well of them. They attended the Gymnasium, or grammar-school ; and while the two eldest wore gold ear-rings, because they were to be tradesmen like their father, everybody had made up their minds, ever since little Wendel was born, that he was to be a student ; and this, of course, would make him the gentleman of the family.

There was something very fascinating about little Wendel. He had his own way with everybody, and the love and admiration which his brothers had for him was quite beautiful. Fritz humoured him, Heinrich humoured him, his mother humoured him, and so did his father, but nobody ever could see that it did him any harm. There was no end to his fun and his good humour, and his kindness to everybody. All the saddler's boys were very healthy, good-looking lads, but Wendel was the handsomest ; his long dark hair fell in rich curls on his shoulders, and his oval face looked very much like a face in some fine old picture. His mother always said that Wendel would be fortunate in life, and that, somehow or other, he would make himself and his family famous. His father for some time thought of making a soldier of him, and sending him into the Austrian service ; but, luckily, he gave up that idea after awhile, and so Wendel began to learn Latin and Greek ; and would be, everybody said, when he was a man, one of the famous professors in one of the Universities.

Just at the very moment when the Christ-kindchen, or Christ-child (who, by the by, was Tailor Uebele's little daughter, borrowed for the occasion), no sooner had she, I say, with her silver crown on her head, and her silver wings on her shoulders, rang her little bell

to summon all the family into the parlour, where the lighted-up Christmas-tree, laden with and overshadowing all the gifts, stood, than a loud knocking and ringing at the house-door announced a visitor. It was odd that anybody should come just then, and more especially when the snow was falling desperately, and the streets were already half snowed-up ! It could not be Pelznickel, for he was far enough out of Germany by that time. Perhaps it might be Conrad Bach, the lame journeyman, come about some business, and now impatient to get back to his own poor Christmas-tree at home.

Saddler Müller rushed out to solve the mystery, and then those in the parlour heard a man's loud voice as the door opened, and a stamping of heavy shoes to kick off the snow, and they all recognised that it was no other than Diedrich Herz, landlord of the Golden Lion of Dürkheim, twelve miles off. Well, that was a surprise, and a very great one, for nobody thought of his coming !

Diedrich Herz was brother-in-law to the saddler, and was at any time a right welcome guest in his house ; but what in the world was he come for now ? Oheim, or uncle Herz, was warmly welcomed by the three boys, who were clamorous to shew him all their presents.

But Oheim Herz, good man ! had brought bad news with him. Very bad news ! The boys heard him tell their father and mother that the lawsuit was going on as desperately as ever ; that he had seen Jurist Gemählin (the lawyer employed by the opposite party) that very day, and he had told him that the saddler's hard old enemy, who had been worrying him at law for five years, had commenced a new suit, and vowed now that he would not desist till he had ruined him. Now was not this bad news ? And all this vexatious lawsuit was about a little vineyard, which six years ago the saddler had bought with a little spare money, and on which he had built a summer-house, hoping not only to have good wine out of his own vineyard but a deal of pleasure beside ; and now the old enemy had set up a plea against the little summer-house, which he asserted stood on half a hand's breadth of his land, and which had cost the good saddler two hundred and fifty gulden to build ; and now it must come down ; yes, there was no doubt of it. Farmer Hardtman, the old enemy, who was as rich as a Jew, would never rest till he had ruined the poor saddler.

Was not that bad news for any man to bring to a decent family on a Christmas eve ? There was no more merriment that night for any of them. Old Barbet and Fritz, with a lanthorn, took home little Christ-kindchen, the tailor's daughter, through

the snow; and as she had an apron full of gingerbread and apples, and a pincushion in the shape of a boot, the bad news did not very much matter to her. The three boys left their parents and Oheim Herz to talk over the unpleasant news he had brought; and then having put out all the Christmas candles that they might be lighted another night, went off quietly to bed.

They all slept in one room; little Wendel's bed, of course, standing in the warmest corner, and being the prettiest of all three. They talked about the bad news which their uncle had brought. For years and years they had heard about this horrid lawsuit, and the wicked man, Farmer Hardtman, and his wicked lawyer, Jurist Gemählin. They had never seen Farmer Hardtman; but what had they not heard about him! He was very rich, and lived somewhere on the plain at a great Hof, as it was called, which means a farm or grange; he employed a great many peasants, and, of course, he was a very hard master. He was not married, and never had been; and that the boys supposed was because he was so wicked and could not get a wife: no woman lived in his house, excepting a poor niece, who was not young, and who was deformed and half blind, and that they fancied must be because they had used her so ill, and because all her life long she had been crying. He was a sort of dismal ogre to their imaginations; and Fritz told his brothers that he remembered once when he was at Oheim Herz's, and went out with him somewhere in his wagon, he pointed out Farmer Hardtman's Hof in the distance, and that it looked like a very large and dismal place. Little Wendel said that he remembered when he was a very little child, and his mother had been shewing him the pictures in the great picture-bible, and telling him all about Jesus Christ and his goodness, and how strong, wicked men killed him out of malice and envy, he fancied that they must be just like Farmer Hardtman; and he fancied, that if Farmer Hardtman had had any children he would have said to them, when they were reading in the Gospel, "Now, my dears, you understand that Jesus Christ was a very wicked man, and that healing the sick and raising the dead were wicked actions, and it was very good of Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot to betray and crucify him; and you must always do as they did!"

These Wendel said had been his thoughts about Farmer Hardtman when he was a very little child; he did not think so now, exactly; but of this he was sure that he was a very wicked and cruel man, and that he could have no pleasure in doing a good

action when he went on as he did, and was plaguing them all so about a little vineyard and a little summer-house, and said now that he would never rest till their father was ruined. Yes, there was no doubt of it, Farmer Hardtman was a wicked man ; and if Jesus Christ had been living now, he dared to say he would have crucified him !

The boys all agreed that he was a very wicked man ; and the saddler and his wife, and Diedrich Herz, all three came to a very similar conclusion over their supper of liver-sausage and potato-salad.

PART II.—HUNTING FOR THE SEVEN-SLEEPER.

At Whitsuntide the boys had a holiday, and they went to spend it with Oheim Herz at the merry Golden Lion. That was a pleasure ! At the Golden Lion, where there was always a something going on, where their mother had lived when she was a child, and where the old storks that then had a nest in the roof had one still, coming and going regularly spring and autumn,—was not that a Whitsuntide pleasure ! And then their uncle would take them to the vineyard, which had cost their father so much trouble, and where the summer-house stood, which the law had decided should come down, and which stood on the very borders of wicked Farmer Hardtman's land ; and they would throw stones on his land, they vowed, just to vex him, though he would never know about it.

The sun shone splendidly that pleasant Whitsuntide. The apple-trees by the road-sides and in the orchards were all in blossom, and the peasants, men and women and children, were at work in the fields. The old father stork sat on the roof-tree, with one leg tucked up, as the boys came in sight of the house ; and Oheim Herz and his wife, who had no children of their own, made a wonderful rejoicing over them when they got in.

Little Wendel had set his mind on having a seven-sleeper. A seven-sleeper, you must understand, is a sort of very little squirrel, not much bigger than a mouse—a little innocent creature that sleeps all winter, and in summer builds its nest and rears its young in the woods. Of all things in this world, Wendel wished for a seven-sleeper, which he might take out of the nest when quite young, tame, and teach to love him ; and it was therefore agreed, that when they went to their uncle's they would go to the woods a few miles off to hunt for one. Neither uncle nor aunt saw any objection to it : why should they ? And after they had been a day or

two they set off to the wood, which was six miles off, taking their dinner with them.

It was a wood of many miles in extent to which they went, and I only wish I could give you an idea of what a pleasant wood it was. I have been there myself, and therefore I know ; in some parts it was all beech-wood, and there the ground was dry and leafless ; and the young, tender leaves made a canopy overhead, as if of the palest green silk ; after awhile there were long stretches of pine-wood that looked solemn and mysterious, and tall, thin grasses grew below, and banks of bluebells shelving to the sun ; and then there were little rivulets of water that ran murmuring on among roots and stones, and all kind of lovely water-plants grew there, and kingfishers and dragon-flies darted about ; but nowhere could they find a seven-sleeper's nest. No, it was not the right kind of wood for that ! It was coppice-wood which they needed, where hazels and young ash-trees grew, and in search of such they went on and on a far greater distance than they had any idea of, and until it was getting quite late in the afternoon. They were many miles from the Golden Lion, but they were not inclined to turn back ; nor, indeed, did they think about it ; and then, just before sunset, they entered the very kind of wood they wanted, and before they had gone very far, little Wendel joyfully exclaimed, "There is one ! there is one !" and pointed to the fork of a young elm, and, without waiting for any opinion from his brothers, hastily climbed the tree.

But he was mistaken ; it was not a seven-sleeper's nest, and, what was much worse, by some sad mischance his foot slipped, and he fell from the forked bough to the ground. Could his brothers have caught him in their arms they would ; but no ! down to the hard, hard ground he came, with a force that made the other two boys feel absolutely sick. It was a terrible cry that he uttered, and writhed his poor body as if in agony, and then lay still and pale as death. His brothers thought he was dead ; but he had fainted.

I will not attempt to describe to you the dreadful hour and half which succeeded this time. Evening had set in ; they were a long way from any road, and poor Wendel's groans and fainting fits almost drove his brothers out of their minds. They were so afraid that he would die in the wood ; they were so very sorry for him, and they did not know how to do him any good. In about an hour and a half, however, they had managed to carry him to a road about a mile off ; but where the road led to they did not know, for they



had never been there before in all their lives. Little Wendel tried to bear his dreadful pain patiently, but he hardly could, and his brothers cried bitterly because they could neither bear it for him nor lessen it in any way.

It was now quite dusk, the stars came out overhead, and they could neither see house nor human being near them.

“Oh, that it had been I!” exclaimed Fritz.

“Oh, that it had been I!” exclaimed Heinrich, without knowing what his brother had said, for they could think about nothing but poor Wendel.

The road where they were was one which diverged from the wood into the open country beyond, and on each side it was bordered with walnut-trees. In ancient times a large stone crucifix had stood at this angle of the road, but now nothing remained of it but the shaft, and the broken stone steps, and a stone bench near. The boys took off their coats and made as good a bed as they could for their little brother, and looked up and down the road in the hope of somebody coming.

Before long they had the comfort of hearing the jingling sound of a light wagon drawn by one horse coming on, and as it neared they could just see that it was driven by a man in a large cloak and a cocked hat. They ran forward to meet him, and could hardly tell their sorrow. “Would he please to help them! Would



he please to take up poor Wendel, for they feared that he would die!"

Without at all understanding what they wanted, the man descended from his wagon, and then seemed all at once to understand and to take into his heart all their great sorrow. He stooped down over Wendel, stroked his cheek, and called him "armes wörmchen," which, though literally, is "poor little worm," means, "poor little dear creature," spoken in the very tenderest manner.

It would have done any body good to have seen the man take off his cloak, and with some hay that he had in the wagon make a bed for Wendel, whom he then lifted up lovingly in his arms, as if he had been his own child, and lay him in it. The boys said that they wanted to go to the Golden Lion at Dürkheim. It was eleven miles off, the man said, and they must never think of that; he would take them, therefore, to his own house, which was only a mile off. Wendel groaned as the wagon began to rattle off again, and then the man, sighing forth his "armes wörmchen," went on at a foot's pace, the two boys sitting beside Wendel, and crying for pity and fear.

The boys hardly noticed what sort of a place the man drove them to, for they were not in a humour to think of any thing but their brother. However, when they got inside, they found themselves in a large *stube*, or parlour, where a lame, delicate-looking

woman, with a very friendly countenance, came forward to meet them from her spinning-wheel. She called the man *Oheim*, or uncle, and when she saw that he was carrying in a suffering child, she rushed to an inner room without bidding, and brought out several pillows and laid them on a wooden sofa to make a bed. Wendel uttered a loud cry as they laid him down, and again fainted. The man then raised him, and laying him across his own large knees, rested his head upon his breast, and the boys both saw with what kind pity he looked down upon him. Had he been his own child he could not have been more tender with him; the woman mixed brandy and water, which the man gave him with a teaspoon, calling him the while affectionate names, and saying he would soon be better.

When Wendel was a little revived, the man ordered his niece to make his own bed ready, and there he would carry him. His bed was the one in the next room, so he was soon laid upon it; and the man called him his little lamb, and his jewel, and said he would send for the doctor, and he would soon be well.

They sent for the doctor, and fortunately met him only a mile or two off on the road. The boys knew the doctor; they had often seen him at the Golden Lion; nay, at one time he had attended their own family, and might always have done so had he not offended their father by saying that Farmer Hardtmann was not a bad man, and that he wished the quarrel might be made up. He seemed very much astonished to see them there, but he did not say why.

Poor little Wendel's leg was broken, and that was the thing of first importance now. So he and the goodman of the house set about attending to it, and the woman waited on them; and everybody spoke so pityingly and so lovingly to little Wendel that he did all he could to bear the horrible pain without crying much.

When the leg was set and he had taken a composing draught which the doctor mixed, and which the goodman of the house had given him to drink, the woman said she would sit up all night with him; and then the two boys began to think that they ought to set out to the Golden Lion, with the bad news to Oheim Herz. While they were considering with themselves what they had best do, they heard the doctor and the master of the house talking together.

"Yes," said the doctor, "as sure as you are a living man that is Saddler Müller's youngest lad."

“Gott bewahr!” exclaimed the man; which means, “Heaven forbid.”

The doctor then abruptly turned to the boys and said that he had another patient to visit some miles further on, but that he would come and see Wendel early in the morning, and then take the two in his one-horse chaise to their uncle at the Golden Lion.

The boys were in the strangest perplexity. The idea had come upon their minds that they were in the house of the wicked Farmer Hardtman, and that this was he. There was J. H. on the stove; and there was J. H. on the carved back of the great walnut chair; and his name was Johannes Hardtman, that they knew. And now a black cloud seemed to have settled upon his face; he had never spoken one single word since his exclamation at the doctor’s words. He sat before them and ate his supper gloomily, as if in brooding wrath. What would be the end of it? They did not dare to speak to each other, but their thoughts were very much the same. Suppose he should turn savage on poor little Wendel? Suppose a thousand dreadful things! They looked at him, and a shade had evidently settled on his countenance; it was not the open, compassionate countenance that it had been. Oh, that some one were but near to tell them what they ought to do! Those were their thoughts as they sat side by side on the wooden sofa, with their hands on their knees, as quiet and old-fashioned as could be. So they sat thinking and full of trouble, until they both fell fast asleep; and when they awoke they found themselves in a bed-chamber, laid on a bed, though not undressed. All at once the strange and sad events of yesterday came to their mind. Poor Wendel’s leg was broken, and they were at Farmer Hardtman’s; and Farmer Hardtman it was who had carried and soothed poor little Wendel, and on whose bed he was laid. They found a Bible in the room, and in it was written “Johannes Hardtman, given to him by his dear mother.” Surely, after all he could not be such a very bad man!

Wendel was feverish, and had passed a very restless night; and the woman said that her uncle had never been in bed, nor had had a wink of sleep; he had been with Wendel most of the night. The two boys sat down and cried; they were again overcome with anxiety and distress. The doctor came, and he looked very grave. Wendel, he said, was very ill; the house must be kept very quiet, and he must be well nursed. Just then Farmer Hardtman came in, and hearing the last words, he walked up and down, saying,

“Ja! ja! ja! ja!” which means “yes, yes,” in a very gruff voice. The doctor said he had sent the news to the Golden Lion, but that he should stop an hour or two to see how Wendel went on. That being the case, Farmer Hardtman said the boys must get ready to go with him; he said that they must not go into Wendel’s room lest they should disturb him; and he seemed so short and stern with them that they dared not disobey him. They mounted therefore into his green wagon as he bade them, and without a word away they drove.

Before going to the Golden Lion, however, he drove up to Jurist Gemählin’s and sent for him to the door: the boys now heard him say, that he would have an end put to the lawsuit; that he did not care about it now; he was willing to lose all the costs, and the sooner it was ended the better. Jurist Gemählin must have thought that the farmer was gone stark mad, he looked so astonished; but Farmer Hardtman did not care for that either, so repeating what he had said, and asking the lawyer if he understood, he drove off, looking as if all the cloud was at once gone from his countenance and nothing but sunshine remained. The boys wished so very much that they might have thanked him, for they understood every word; and so they might have done, for the farmer would have taken it very well, only they did not know it. However, all this was pleasant enough: the vexatious lawsuit was at an end, the summer-house might stand, their father could enjoy his vineyard, and Farmer Hardtman, after all, was a good man. There wanted nothing now but that dear little Wendel were quite well.

Both bad and good news soon reached the saddler’s, and in a very few days Mrs. Sattlerin Müller was sitting on one side of little Wendel’s bed, and Farmer Hardtman was standing on the other, with a little seven-sleeper in his cocked-hat, which he had given a boy half-a-florin to catch in the wood. The first time that little Wendel went out was in Farmer Hardtman’s green wagon; the farmer drove them, and his mother went with them. They went to eat sour milk, strawberries, and to drink coffee in the summer-house at the vineyard; and Saddler Müller and the two boys were there, and Oheim Herz and his wife from the Golden Lion, and it was the happiest little party that ever met on a summer’s day.

There was now an end of all disunion. In after years, whether little Wendel belonged to Farmer Hardtman or to his own family it was difficult to say; both claimed him, and the claim was a bond of love between them. His mother had said truly; Wendel was born to be fortunate—he was born to be a spirit of love and reconciliation.

THE MOTHER'S GRAVE.

A CHILD'S LAMENTATION.

By Miss Sheridan Carey.

"I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me."—Job xxx. 20.

Who lies beneath this verdant tomb,
Where violets scatter deep perfume,
Where ivy creeps and pansies bloom ?

My Mother !

The green grass waves above thy bed,
Light is the turf that hides thine head,
And soft the odour o'er thee shed,

My Mother !

The church bell tolls upon the breeze,
Full gaily hum the summer bees,
And blithe birds carol on the trees,

My Mother !

Sweet is the apple-orchard near,
Sweet murmurs by the mill-stream clear,
Sweet in the corn the lark to hear,

My Mother !

With golden buds the moor is bright,
Fair, fair the wheat-field to the sight,
And clothed the hills in purple light,

My Mother !

Thou canst not hear, thou canst not see,
The mill, the brook, the bird, the tree ;
The merry day is night to thee,

My Mother !

For thee no more the stream shall flow,
The orchard bloom, the heather blow ;
Thine eyes are closed, thine head lies low

My Mother !

Now oft beneath the walnut-tree
Where first I tried mine A, B, C,
And strove to reckon one, two, three,

My Mother !

I take my little garden-chair,
When afternoons are fine and fair,
But vainly hope to find thee there,

My Mother !

Ah ! no one now, all kind and good,
Tells stories of "Red Riding Hood,"
Or sings "The Children in the Wood,"

My Mother !

Blind Ellen came the other day,
Her weekly rent she had to pay,
But wiped her eyes and crept away,

My Mother !

All—all is changed ; e'en puss no more
Runs round and round upon the floor,
But pining watches at the door,

My Mother !

And weary is the live-long day,—
No joyous talk, no gladsome play !
Oh ! would thou wert not gone away,

My Mother !

I left my father near the stile,
Kingeups I went to seek the while,
Pale was his cheek and faint his smile,

My Mother !

I strove to coax him forth to play,
So hid behind the tombstone gray
Then peep'd ;—but he's no longer gay,

My Mother !

Last night he took me on his knee,
And, gazing mournfully on me,
Pray'd God my Father fond to be,

My Mother !

And when to cheer him all I tried,
Nought he to aught I said replied,
But wept and turn'd his head aside,

My Mother !

Yet ev'ry eve both he and I
Come here to talk of times gone by,
And sit beside thy grave and cry,

My Mother !

And oft we call upon thy name :
Ah, me ! when once we did the same,
Who sweetly smiled and swiftly came ?

My Mother !

Now, now the moaning wind sweeps by,
And waves the poplar boughs on high,
But ah ! no voice makes fond reply,

My Mother !

They tell me thou art gone to Gon,
That 'tis but dust beneath the sod,
That Death's "a path which must be
trod,"

My Mother !

And when I raise my searching eyes
I think I see thee in the skies,
Till tears all blindingly arise,

My Mother !

Oh ! had I wings I'd fly to thee,
And, with my father, would we be
In heaven a happy family,

My Mother !

Then let me read Gon's book with care,
And think betimes of praise and pray'r,
That I, one day, may join thee there,

My Mother !



The Church Stile.

THE CHURCH STILE.

THIS little picture is engraved from a pencil-drawing by the late Sir Augustus Caldecott. The "Playmate" intends to enrich his pages now and then with the works of Ancient and Modern celebrated Painters, both English and foreign, that their much-honoured names may grow familiar to his comrades.

A Companion to the beautiful Drawing, "Muscipula," (given recently), by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a copy (by permission) of Mr. Mulready's "Wolf and the Lamb," will soon be forthcoming.



THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

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No. II.—EAGLES.

No birds have been more celebrated or talked of than eagles, which are esteemed the noblest of all the feathered race. This can scarcely be accounted for, unless it be for their majestic manner of flying, their grand beauty, and their strength. Not only have

they been sung of by poets, but they have been made the symbols of daring and courage in various ways. The Romans carried eagles on their standards ; they have always been one of the signs of imperial power, and are found in many ancient coats of arms, which were granted to the bearers for some valorous exploits.

Eagles are among those birds of prey which feed by day, and besides the usual term of *Diurnæ*, given to them in consequence, they are, in spite of their kingly character, called ignoble, because they are never, like some other birds of prey, used for hunting. Their beaks are straight in the upper part, very strong, and only curved at the point, which is very sharp ; their strong legs are more or less covered with feathers, their talons are very powerful, and are often called pounces. Like the vulture, their eyes look sideways, and are remarkable for their brilliancy. They (and, in fact, all other birds) have a third eyelid, which they can, when they please, draw over their eyes from the innermost corner ; and it is probably this protecting skin which enables them to bear a great quantity of light without being dazzled : and because people have delighted in giving extraordinary powers to the eagle, they have converted this into the fable that it always flies in the face of the sun, and can look at that luminous body without blinking.

The colours of these birds vary in the different shades of brown, black, and white, and sometimes all three tints are to be found in the same bird. They build their nests on high rocks and mountains, and in these eyries, as they are called, missing articles (stolen from man) have been occasionally found by the daring adventurer who has climbed up to them.

The Imperial Eagle has the longest wings, and many exaggerated stories are told of its strength and power. The largest of all is the great Harpy of South America, which is said to be so strong that it will split a man's skull with one stroke of its beak. It feeds principally upon storks, but has been often seen to carry away fawns and young lamas. Generally speaking, however, the eagles of warm climates are smaller than those which inhabit the north ; those known in Africa are not much bigger than crows, and are black and white ; and a very diminutive one lives in the East Indies, which is consecrated by the Brahmins to their god Vishnu. The Fishing Eagles, so called because they prey upon fish, abound in the north, and are of considerable size ; but all kinds will pursue small birds and young animals : they do not, however, like the vulture, prefer dead flesh.

In mythology, the eagle is termed the bird of Jupiter, and is said to have fed this heathen god with nectar when he was young. For this reason it was always a favoured attendant upon him, was employed in carrying his messages and conveying his lightning, and it is often represented as grasping the lightning in its talons. An eagle is said to have borne the beautiful shepherd Ganymede up to heaven, when Jupiter wanted to make him his cup-bearer ; and Hebe, the goddess of health and youth, always had one near to her. Both of these favourites of Jupiter were ordered by him to feed his eagles, and this story has occasioned those beautiful engravings which we often see on the stones set in rings and seals which have been preserved from those days. Ancient sculpture also repeats the same story.

A friend of ours, who had very large gates to his stable-yard, was constantly liable to the entrance and petty thefts of the children of the village where he lived, and many an idle little rogue did he find on his premises, who had obtained access by slipping unperceived through this entrance. He had dogs, but the children soon made friends with them, and passed them unmolested. At last this gentleman purchased a pair of the Golden, or common Eagles, and chained one on each side of the gate. At first no one liked to pass them, but as the fierce guardians became accustomed to those employed in the yard, they were secured from their attacks. Strangers, however, never could bribe or coax them into peace, or perhaps they were thought the more dangerous from their appearance than they were in reality ; at all events, intruders were kept at a distance. One of the eagles broke his chain and flew away, but was soon caught again in a high tree, in which the remaining portion of the chain attached to its leg had become entangled.

We will conclude this account with Thomson's beautiful description of the kingly bird :—

" High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
On utmost Kilda's shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The royal eagle draws his vig'rous young,
Strong pounced and ardent with paternal fire ;
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
He drives them from his fort, the tow'ring seat
For ages of his empire, which in peace
Unstain'd he holds ; while many a league to sea
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles."



TASSO AND HIS SISTER.

By Mrs. Hemans.

SHE sat where on each wind that sighed
 The citron's breath went by,
 While the deep gold of eventide
 Burned in the Italian sky. [close
 Her bower was one where daylight's
 Full oft sweet laughter found,
 As thence the voice of childhood rose
 To the high vineyards round.

18.

But still and thoughtful at her knee,
 Her children stood that hour,
 Their bursts of song and dancing glee
 Hushed as by words of power. [gazed
 With bright, fixed, wondering eyes, that
 Up to their mother's face, [raised,
 With brows through parting ringlets
 They stood in silent grace.

T

While she, yet something o'er her brow
Of mournfulness was spread,
Forth from a poet's magic book
The glorious numbers read,
The proud, undying lay, which poured
Its light on other years :
His of the gifted pen and sword,
The triumph and the tears.

She read of fair Erminia's flight,
Which Venice once might hear
Sung on her glittering seas at night
By many a gondolier.
Of him she read who broke the charm
That wraps the myrtle grove—
Of Godfrey's deeds—of Tancred's arm,
That slew his paynim love.

Young cheeks around that bright page
glowed,
Young holy hearts were stirred,
And the meek tear of woman flowed
Fast o'er each burning word ;
And sounds of breeze, and fount, and
leaf,
Came sweet each pause between ;
When a strange voice of sudden grief
Burst on the gentle scene.

The mother turned ; a wayworn man,
In pilgrim garb, stood nigh ;
Of stately mien, yet wild and wan—
Of proud, yet restless eye ;

But drops that would not stay for pride
From that dark eye gushed free,
As, pressing his pale brow, he cried,
“Forgotten ! even by thee !

“Am I so changed ?—And yet we two
Oft, hand in hand, have played.
This brow hath been all bathed in dew
From wreaths which thou hast made.
We have knelt down and said one prayer,
And sung one vesper strain ; [care.
My thoughts are dark with clouds of
Tell me those words again.

“Life hath been heavy on my head,
I come a stricken deer,
Bearing the heart midst crowds that
bled
To bleed in stillness here.”
She gazed till thoughts that long had
slept
Shook all her thrilling frame ;
She fell upon his neck and wept,
And breathed her brother's name.

Her brother's name !—and who was *he* ?
The weary one,—the unknown,
That came the bitter world to flee—
A stranger to his own.
He was the bard of gifts divine,
To sway the hearts of men—
He of the song for Salem's shrine,
He of the sword and pen.

THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

By Mary Roberts.

THE village seems deserted. No children on the green running races with one another, or playing at hunt-the-slipper on the smooth turf. No old men resting beneath the memorial-tree, sunning themselves, and talking with feeble voices, like the aged men of Troy, compared by Homer to grasshoppers ; neither is there the sound of the spinning-wheel beside the open cottage-door, with its rustic porch and clustering hops. All are away to the harvest-field. Let us go there too. We are bidden guests at Farmer Drayton's, and our holiday will pass merrily among the reapers.

“Good morning ! Goody. Where are you going with your

troop of rosy children, all glee and gossip?" "To the harvest-field, young masters. 'Tis a pleasant time, that comes but once in the year, and we make the most of it. My master was out before the sun, reaping in the field beside the river; but I had to dress the children and get his dinner, and that makes me late." "Good day, then; we will not hinder you." Away she goes half running, the children out of breath with delight. They have turned into Johnson's field. Let us follow them. There they are with twenty or thirty others, gathering the scattered ears, as Ruth gathered them on the plains of Bethlehem. Look at Goody! How diligently she is picking up the ears! The children, too, are all helping. Before the season is over, they will collect at least three clear bushels of wheat; and if the weather prove showery, and the wagon is hurried to the barn, they will obtain a larger quantity.

Farmer Johnson is at the furthest end, watching his reapers. He looks well pleased, and with reason, for the rustling corn stands thick and the men work cheerfully. The Lord of the Field (for such the chief reaper is called), heads the long line of farming-servants. When he clasps the opposite ears in his strong arms, they clasp theirs also; when he thrusts in his sickle, they do the same; and there is presently laid low a wide extent of grain, with its garniture of flowers,—the corn-cockle, and scarlet-poppy, sweet basil, and marjoram, herbs Robert and Christopher, Cicily and William—names by which the old simplers commemorated worth or friendship, or the villagers of other days associated with the memory of benefactors, whose skill and kindness might be shadowed forth in the qualities of their favourite plants. It seems as if those who bind up the sheaves have some pleasant or grateful thoughts connected with the prostrate flowers, for a few are carefully taken from among the rest and put aside.

Before the young wheat springs up, we shall hear, I fancy, the church-bells ringing merrily, for there are John Grey and Susan Bell hard at work. He has just pulled the prickly stems of the woolly thistle from the corn she is about to bind. Farmer Johnson often tells the men and women to mind their work; but he takes no notice of John and Sally, though many a kindly word passes between them, for he knows that more industrious and well-conducted young people are nowhere to be found.

Hark to that loud holla! What is it? The last shout of summer from Drayton's farm, on the hill side. The men are shouting at the top of their voices.

“ We have done, and well done ; and pleased our master too !”

This is customary in the West of England, when the loaded waggon passes for the last time through the gate, and the field is left to the gleaners. Had we been earlier, we might have seen the good old man fling many a liberal handful from the sheaves, for such is his habit, and he loves to repeat the kind admonition given to the Jewish husbandman, “ Thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy fields ; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger.”

What a bustle must have been at the old man’s house to-day ! The placing of the long tables, and decking them with flowers ; the cheerful looks of the farmer’s wife, and the merry faces of the damsels ; the baking and roasting, frizzling and frying ; the hurrying hither and thither, the tumbling over the house-dog, and the flying of the cat before them ; and ever and anon would be heard the quiet, grateful words, with which the farmer expresses the gladness of his heart, according to his custom. There will be no riotous doings at his harvest-home ; no anxious wives and frightened children in the cottages, nor aching heads next day. Well, now, let us be gone : we shall be in good time for the mead and home-baked cake.

There sit the farmer and his wife at the head of the oak table, like the lord and lady of the May in olden times, and right and left many an old neighbour and young friend ; his children too, and all the farm-servants, with their families. Right merry are they. Harmless jests go round ; and some sly looks and questions as to whether the cottage near the mill-pond is taken. Now all is quiet ; the men and their wives look serious, and the young ones cease giggling. The farmer rises reverently, and, doffing his cap, thanks the Giver of all Good for the “ blessing of an abundant harvest.” Then taking up the words of the harvest shout, he tells his men, “ That they have done, and well done ; and pleased their master too ;” and he wishes them long life, and the coming round of many a glad harvest-home.



ON CATS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

“WHAT a loud cry, Edward!” said Mrs. Stanhope to her son, as she came into the room where he was. “What is the matter?” “The naughty cat has given me a terrible scratch, mamma,” answered Edward, his face still red with pain and anger; “see, it does really bleed.” “Yes, I see,” returned Mrs. Stanhope; “it is a very deep and ragged wound; but we will put a little arnica on it, and it will soon be healed. You could not, however, have made much more noise if you had been clawed by a lion.” “It was so ungrateful of Frisket,” said Edward, looking very grave, “after I have been so kind to him; and that is worse to think of than the pain.” “I have no doubt of it,” observed his mamma; “but, from the lion to our favourite here, all cats are treacherous; and although their dispositions may be softened by being tamed, we cannot expect their nature to be wholly corrected, or, perhaps, we should say, altered: for this cunning was given to them in their wild state for their own defence, and to secure their prey.” “Why

do you call lions cats, mamma?" asked Edward, after a pause, during which he had been making up his quarrel with his pet. "Because," replied Mrs. Stanhope, "they, as well as tigers, leopards, panthers, jaguars, cougars, and lynxes, all belong to the same group of animals, called *felis* in Latin, and *cat* in English. It is not because they differ in size and colour that naturalists consider animals as distinct from each other. Those which have the same sort of teeth, the same toes, the same habits, and are made within in a similar manner, are all said to be of the same kind or tribe, and bear one general name besides their own. If you are not afraid to hold your cat's mouth open, you will see that he has much the same teeth as those in the tiger's skull in papa's study, and which your uncle brought from India. Go and fetch it, and let us compare them. See, the front of the jaws, or the muzzle, is short and round ; the first grinders are very sharp ; then we find one on each side much larger than the rest—these are called the carnivorous, or flesh-eating teeth, and the others have several round, blunt projections on them ; the eye-teeth, or tusks, are also large and sharp, and well adapted for tearing flesh. Then look at the hind feet of puss : you see the heel is covered with hair, which is a proof that he, like the rest of his kind, never sets his heel to the ground : his fore paws, his chest and shoulders, are much stronger than his hinder parts ; both being well adapted for springing upon and seizing prey. The claws are always kept sharp and ready for use, for when they are not wanted they are drawn back partially under the skin, and the points stick up from the ground ; and when we say 'as playful as a kitten,' we might just as well substitute the word whelp or cub. Did you never hear your aunt talk of the panther she once had, which used to play all sorts of tricks?" "No, mamma, do tell me one of them," said Edward. "One of the drollest," resumed Mrs. Stanhope, "was, when the panther hid himself under a sofa, and watched an old woman who came into the room to sweep the floor with a short-handled brush. This, of course, made her stoop in her work, and the panther, seizing his opportunity, leaped upon her back, where he stood with his head on one side, wagging his tail, looking the very picture of fun. It was no fun, however, to the old woman, who thought she was going to be devoured ; she screamed, although she dared not stir ; the other servants hastened to see what was the matter, but the instant they beheld the poor creature with her rough playmate on her back, they ran away, and not till your uncle, attracted by the noise, came to the rescue, did

the animal attempt to come down. The same beast seeing a boy fast asleep on the step of a door, came very softly behind him, gave him a blow with his fore paw, and knocked him down ; then ran and hid himself, expecting the boy to run after and find him, and begging play by every gesture into which he could twist himself. But I have now a much more serious story to tell you of a jaguar, or American panther, the heroine of which is, I believe, still living. This lady and her husband were among the earliest settlers in the town of Meadville, and at first lived in a cabin, or small house, made of logs of wood. The luxury of glass was unknown in that wild place among the forests, and, consequently, light and air were admitted by holes which were always open. Both husband and wife had been away from home for a day or two, and on their return they found some deer's flesh, which had been hanging up inside, partly eaten, and the tracks of an animal, which the husband supposed to be those of a large dog. This gentleman was again obliged to leave home for a night, but his lady remained in the house alone. She went to bed, and had not been long there before she heard an animal clamber up the outside of the hut, and jump down through one of the openings into the adjoining room, with which her sleeping apartment was connected by a doorway without a door. Peeping out, she saw a huge panther apparently seeking for prey, and of course very hungry and fierce. She beat against the partition between the rooms, and screamed as loudly as she could, which so startled the panther that he jumped out. He was, however, soon in again, and a second time she frightened him away in the same manner, when she sprang out of bed and went to the fire-place, in the hope of making a sufficient blaze to deter the panther from entering again ; but the embers were too much burnt, and would not send forth any flame. She thought of getting under the bed, but the animal could get there also, and tear her to pieces before she could make any resistance. The only plan which then occurred to her for perfect security was to get into a large sea-chest of her husband's, which was nearly empty. Into that she crept ; but there was danger of her being smothered, so she put her hand between the edge of the chest and the lid, so as to keep the latter open a little and admit air. Fortunately this lid overhung the sides, which saved her fingers from the panther : he soon arrived, and after snuffing about for some time, evidently discovered where she was, and prowled round and round the chest, licking and scratching the wood close to her fingers. There she lay, scarcely

daring to breathe, and listening intently to every movement of her enemy. At last he jumped on the top of the chest, and his weight crushed her fingers terribly, but she was brave enough to keep them where they were till the panther, tired of his fruitless efforts to get at her, and finding nothing else to eat, finally retreated. She did not, however, dare to come quite out of the chest until morning, for she feared, as long as it was dark, that the beast might come again ; so there she sat, ready to crouch down into her hiding-place if she heard a noise, till daylight, when she dressed herself as well as she could with her lame hand, and ran with all her speed to her nearest neighbours, who lived about a mile distant, where her fingers were dressed, and some of whom made immediate search for the panther. He was soon found close by in the thicket with his mate, and was killed, but the female escaped.”

THE DISCONTENTED BITTERN.

A FABLE.

A BITTERN was dissatisfied with his condition. He did not love to be living in swamps, and eating all manner of reptiles. He wanted to live in the orchard like the robin, and be a favourite with every body. “Bitterns can sing as well as robins,” said he ; “and I have no notion of being confined to a marsh, and catching fever and ague all my days.” So he started for the orchard, partly flying and partly running at full speed, and determined to build him a house like the robin, on an apple-tree. He was engaged in this business the next day, when some one from the cottage near by saw him, and shot him, so that his wing was broken. Then he was glad to hobble back to his old home in the swamp, and go to eating frogs and worms again.

MORAL.

Sometimes, when we complain of our condition in life, Providence allows us to change it, but shews us that we were perhaps quite as well off before.—*Theodore Thinker.*



THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.

PAINTED BY WILLIAM MULREADY, R.A.

Engraved for the "Playmate," with the permission of Messrs. Graves.

THE two boys in this picture are not very much alike. One is a quarrelsome fellow, always ready to play the tyrant, and he does so all the more over those boys who are afraid of him. When a boy is not afraid of him, but stands sturdy, then he is much

quieter; indeed he is then rather a coward. Among all his playmates he is called the "Wolf." In this picture he is attacking a boy so quiet and meek, that *he* is called the "Lamb." The Wolf attacks the Lamb because the latter *is* so gentle and timid. The Lamb's mother is, as you see, much troubled, and his little sister is very fearful of the Wolf when he is in a passion.

The picture tells this story very clearly. Every one can see which is the Wolf and which the Lamb. The picture was a very great favourite with King George IV., who bought it, and used to carry it about with him to London and to Windsor, and hang it up near his sofa.

THOUGHTS OF THE LITTLE STAR-GAZER.

By the Rev. C. H. A. Bulkley.

I'm looking on the stars, mother,
That shine up there all bright,
So like a brilliant string of beads
Around the neck of Night.

I love to greet their smiles, mother,
That fall soft from the skies;
They seem to gaze on me in love
With their sweet angel-eyes.

It seems to me, sometimes, mother,
That they are windows bright,
Through which the happy spirits look,
And shine Heaven's holy light.

Oh! are they not the gates, mother,
Of radiant pearl and gold,
By which we enter heaven at last,
To rest in God's dear fold?

I often think I see, mother,
The angels moving there,
And leaving in their circling course
Their radiant footsteps' glare.

I doubt not that the sun, mother,
In his bold eagle-flight,
Hath from his glittering wing let fall
Those dew-like drops of light.

I oftentimes look to see, mother,
Those sparks flash in the sky,
As though Love at his forge had made
Their circled radiance fly.

Each time I see one shoot, mother,
And die in darkening space,
I think that some loved light of life
Hath left its earthly place.

They look as if they were, mother,
Bright golden bells that ring,
And make accordant music-tones
Whene'er the angels sing.

Oh! I should love to hear, mother,
Their notes close to my ears,
For I have read full often of
"The music of the spheres."

But, ah! the sweetest sounds, mother,
Of love and truth are known,
Like those rapt songs of morning stars,
In that far realm alone.

Yon sky a garden seems, mother,
All full of flowery beds, [breath
Where sunbeams sleep, and summer's
Its incense ever sheds.

Oh! I could almost leave, mother,
My happy home and thee,
To roam amid that starry field,
And in that garden be.

At night I seem to sit, mother,
Beneath a great tree's shade,
Upon whose limbs grow golden fruits,
And buds that never fade.

Why doth not that bright fruit, mother,
Sometimes to earth fall down?
Will never one come near my grasp
When 'tis to ripeness grown?

Oh! I do often strive, mother,
To catch one glowing gem,
And place it with the dearest hearts
In Love's bright diadem.

Oh! thus it often is, mother,
The brightest things we see,
Though ever loved and long desired,
Too far from us will flee.

I would be like a star, mother,
Far from the touch of sin,
And ever own a heart that glows
All full of light within.

I love those isles of light, mother,
In that wide, shoreless sea,
The azure sea, where floats the moon
So cloudlessly and free.

Oh! I would joy to glide, mother,
A bark of light among
Those angel-homes, or moor me safe
Where radiant raptures throng.

Oft have I heard it said, mother,
That sailors on the sea, [barks
By those sweet lights have steered their
Safe o'er that billowy lea.

Oh! how would I rejoice, mother,
To cheer such lonely eyes,
Or be a star of Truth to shew
The home of Paradise.

Did not so blest a light, mother,
Shine on the magi's way,
To lead them to the manger where
The infant Saviour lay?

Full well do I believe, mother,
That on the wall of night,
God's pen of fire, in wisdom dipp'd,
Hath traced these words of light.

I read in God's dear book, mother,
That they whose love divine
Turns many unto righteousness,
Like stars for ever shine.

Is not each lustrous world, mother,
A glorious kingdom given,
To all who here by truth and right
May win the prize of heaven?

Oh! I will ever strive, mother,
To love God and all things,
That I may dwell and reign above
Where Love's light ever springs.

Yes! I will pray for all, mother,
And bless with truth each soul,
That, like a star, my name may shine
In heaven's immortal scroll.

THE HUNTER AND HIS BOW.

A SPORTSMAN had once an excellent bow of ebony, with which he could shoot very far and with a sure aim, and which, therefore, he greatly esteemed. But one day, when he happened to look at it attentively, he said, "My good bow, you certainly shoot very well, and you look, too, very nice and smooth; I think, however, a little ornament would greatly improve you. I will see if I cannot remedy this defect." To this end he consulted the best worker in ebony he could hear of, and agreed with him that he should carve a picture of a complete chase upon his bow; and what could be more appropriate for a huntsman's bow than such a picture? The man was delighted. "Thou hast well deserved this ornament, my dear bow," said he: "now let me try you." He stretched—and the bow broke!

THE QUEEN-BEE.

Translated by John Edward Taylor, from the German of Grimm.

Two king's sons once went out into the world to seek adventures; but they soon fell into a wild and riotous life, and never came home again. After a time the youngest son, who was called Dumpling, went out to look for his brothers; but when he found them, they only laughed at him for thinking that such a simpleton as he could fight his way in the world, whilst they who were so much cleverer could not get on. However they all travelled on together, and at length came to an ant-hill. The two eldest brothers wanted to dig it up, to see how the little ants would run about in their fright, and carry off their eggs. But Dumpling said, "Let the little creatures alone; I will not have you disturb them." Then they went further, and came to a lake, upon which there were many, many ducks swimming about. The two brothers wished to catch a couple and roast them; but Dumpling again said, "Leave the poor things in peace; I will not let you kill them." At length they came to a bee's nest, in which there was so much honey that it ran down the side of the tree. The two brothers would have set fire to the tree, and killed the bees, so that they might take away the honey; but Dumpling again stopped them and said, "Leave the poor bees in peace; I will not have you burn them."

Then the three brothers came to a castle, and in the stables they saw many horses; but all were of stone. No one was to be seen, and they went on and on through all the rooms, until they came to a door at the furthest end, upon which hung three locks. In the middle of the door was a little wicket, through which they could peep into the chamber. There they saw a little grey man sitting at a table; and they called to him again and again; but he did not hear. At last they called a third time; then he got up from his seat and came out. He did not speak a word, but took them by the hand, and led them to a table covered with all sorts of good things. And when they had eaten and drunk their fill, he took each one to his own sleeping-room.

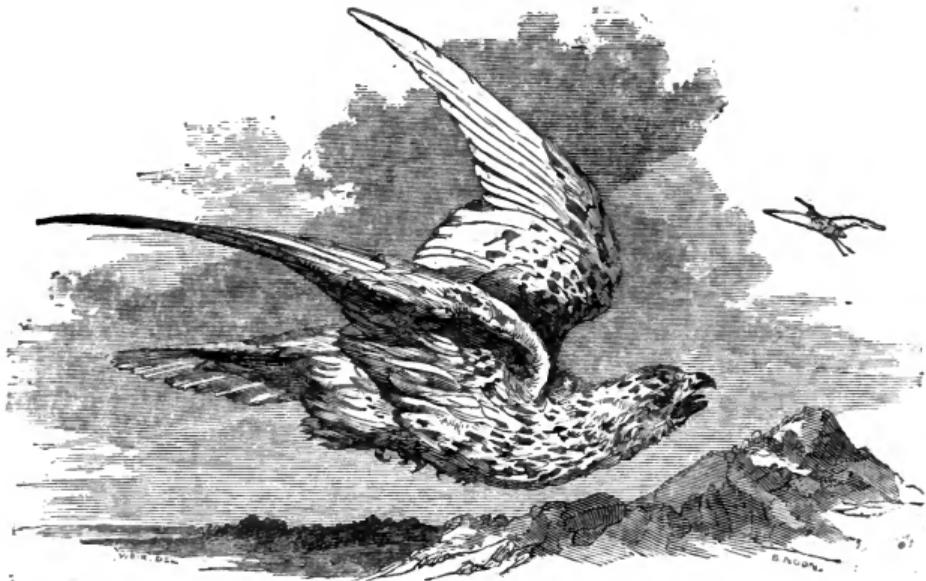
The next morning the little man came to the eldest brother, beckoned to him, and led him to a stone-table, whereon were written three tasks, by which the castle might be disenchanted. The first was as follows, "In the wood beneath the moss lie hid the pearls of the king's daughter, a thousand in number: these must be



sought ; and if at sunset a single one is missing, he who searched shall be turned to stone." The eldest of the brothers sallied forth, and looked about all day long for the pearls ; but when evening came he had not found more than an hundred ; so it came to pass as was written on the table, and he was turned into stone. On the following day, the second brother undertook the task ; but he had not much better luck than the eldest, for he found only two hundred pearls, and so he was changed to stone. At last came Dumpling's turn. He searched and searched about in the moss, but, alas ! the pearls were hard to find, and the work went slowly on. Then he sat down upon a stone and began to cry. And whilst he was sitting thus, up came the ant-king, whose life he had saved, with a troop of five thousand ants, and in a very short time the little creatures had found all the pearls and dragged them together into a heap.

Now the second task was, to fetch the key of the princess's chamber from the bottom of a lake. When Dumpling came to the lake, the ducks, which he had before saved, came swimming up to him, dived to the bottom, and fetched up the key. The third task, however, was the hardest one—to find out the youngest and best of the three sleeping daughters of the king. But they were all exactly alike and in no way differed from one another, except that, before falling asleep, they had eaten of different sweets—the eldest one a piece of sugar, the second a little treacle, and the youngest a spoonful of honey. Then came the queen-bee, which Dumpling had saved from the fire, and tasted the lips of all the three ; at last she settled upon the lips of the one who had eaten the honey, and thus the king's son knew the right princess. Then the spell was broken ; all were awakened out of sleep, and those who had been changed to stone now returned to their proper form. Dumpling married the youngest and best daughter, and became king after her father's death : but his two brothers married the two other sisters.





THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

No. III.—FALCONS, HAWKS.

THOSE diurnal birds of prey which can be trained for hunting are termed Nobiles, or Noble; and among them are almost all those which form the falcon or hawk tribe. They equal eagles in courage; and although they are inferior in size and strength, they are superior in docility, gentleness, and entire obedience to the commands of those who train them for use or amusement.

The beak of falcons is very strong, and much more curved than that of any other bird of prey; it is also shorter, and has a projection from each edge of the upper part, like a sharply pointed tooth. The wings are long, and end in a point on one side; which shape obliges these birds to fly in a slanting direction when the weather is calm, and if they wish to rise in a straight line, they are forced to fly against the wind. They do not seek dead prey, and pursue their game at full speed, falling down upon it perpendicularly with great swiftness. Old birds differ much from the young in plumage, and the colours are brown, white, black, grey, and occasionally a reddish tint; the female is generally one-third larger than the male; the eye-brows of both project very much, which gives them a very

peculiar appearance, and their eyes are remarkably brilliant. The size varies from that of a large cock to a pigeon ; the legs are blue or yellow, and there is great variety of shape in the spots and bands formed by the feathers.

In consequence of falconry, or hawking, having been in former times a sport among all classes in northern nations, many curious laws were made about the practice of it, as at this day we find for shooting, fishing, or hunting with dogs ; and a great deal of money was spent in keeping and training these birds. In those days it was only thought necessary for a nobleman to understand hawking, hunting, and exercises of arms ; and he might, if he pleased, leave study and learning to those who were of a rank beneath his own, without being remarkable for his ignorance. There are many old portraits of noblemen and gentlemen, and even ladies (for they used to join in the sport on horseback), with falcons on their wrists ; and King Harold was represented with a bird on his hand and a dog under his arm. The chief falconer was the fourth officer in rank at court, at the time when Wales had kings of its own ; but he was only allowed to take three draughts a-day out of his drinking-horn, for fear he should get tipsy and neglect his birds.

The expenses of falconry being so enormous, those who infringed the laws respecting it were often severely punished. From a very old book we learn, that to steal a hawk, or even its eggs when found by chance, in the time of Edward II., subjected a person to imprisonment, and to pay a sum of money. It was the same in the time of Queen Elizabeth, with the additions that the offender was obliged to find some one who would answer for his good behaviour for seven years ; and if he could not procure any one to do so, he was forced to remain in prison for that period.

A thousand pounds are said to have been given for a set of hawks, although the birds were procured in England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland ; these large sums, therefore, must have been paid for the trouble of training them. Occasionally they were brought from Norway, and were then so much thought of, that they were esteemed presents fit for a sovereign. King John had two given to him as a bribe for allowing a man to trade in cheese.

Among the different kinds used in the sport, the Peregrine falcon was reckoned one of the best, and is now the only one which is kept for the purpose in England, and that very rarely. Henry II. is said to have sent for some of them every year into Pembrokeshire. It however lives in most of the northern parts of the earth,

and its flight is so rapid, that there are few countries which it does not visit.

The Gyr falcon is one of the largest of the tribe ; its legs and beak are yellow, and it was formerly trained to catch cranes, herons, and wild geese. The Goshawk was also flown at the same prey, but more especially at pheasants and partridges. Among the smaller trained species was the Kestril, which nests in the holes of ruins, high towers, or clefts of rocks ; its chief food is field-mice, and it is that hawk which we see remaining a long time in the air in one spot, fanning its wings and watching for its prey. The Hobby, also a small species, was taught to catch larks, and was thrown from the hand near their haunts, when the poor little creatures would crowd together and remain motionless from fear ; a net was then thrown over them, and all were secured.

The Kite, the Sparrowhawk, the Hen-harrier, the Merlin, and the Buzzard, do not appear to have been used for sporting. The first builds its nest in large forests, and has a forked tail. It may be known in the air from all other birds by its smooth flight, for its wings scarcely seem to move, and it appears frequently to remain motionless for a time. There is an old saying, that when kites fly high it will be fair weather ; and the famous Pliny, who lived in the last times of the ancient Romans, and wrote a great deal about birds, says that the invention of the rudder for steering boats and ships was taken from the motion of a kite's tail.

The Sparrowhawk is a great enemy to pigeons and partridges ; and it and the Hen-harrier are very destructive to poultry. When we hear a hen cackle, and see her cower down upon the ground, and anxiously cover all her chickens with her wings, we may be sure that one of these destroyers is in the neighbourhood. The Merlin, although small, is a very courageous bird, flies low, and skims along the tops of the hedges in search of its prey ; it kills partridges by one stroke upon the neck.

The Buzzards are much less active than other hawks, eat frogs, lizards, mice, rabbits, birds, worms, and insects ; and one of them, which frequents moors and marshy places, never soars into the air. It is a very voracious bird, and kills many young ducks ; its legs are longer and more slender than those of hawks in general, by which it is better enabled to find its way through wet places.



THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

Now ponder well, you parents dear,
 These words which I shall write;
 A doleful story you shall hear,
 In time brought forth to light.
 A gentleman of good account
 In Norfolk dwelt of late,
 Whose wealth and riches did surmount
 Most men of his estate.

20.

Sore sick he was, and like to die,
 No help his life could save;
 His wife by him as sick did lie,
 And both possess'd one grave.
 No love between these two was lost,
 Each was to other kind,
 In love they lived, in love they died,
 And left two babes behind:

X

The one a fine and pretty boy,
Not passing three years old;
The other a girl more young than he,
And made in beauty's mould.
The father left his little son,
As plainly doth appear,
When he to perfect age should come,
Three hundred pounds a-year.

And to his little daughter Jane,
Five hundred pounds in gold,
To be paid down on marriage-day,
Which might not be controll'd :
But if the children chance to die
Ere they to age should come,
Their uncle should possess their wealth;
For so the will did run.

"Now, brother," said the dying man,
"Look to my children dear;
Be good unto my boy and girl,
No friends else have they here :
To God and you I do command
My children dear this day;
But little while be sure we have
Within this world to stay.

You must be father and mother both,
And uncle all in one;
God knows what will become of them
When I am dead and gone!"
With that bespake their mother dear,
"O brother kind," quoth she,
"You are the man must bring my babes
To wealth or misery :

If you do keep them carefully
Then God will you reward;
But if you otherwise should deal,
God will your deeds regard."
With lips as cold as any stone,
They kiss'd their children small:
"God bless you both, my children dear!"
With that the tears did fall.

These speeches then their brother spake
To this sick couple there :
"The keeping of your little ones,
Sweet sister, do not fear :
God never prosper me nor mine,
Nor aught else that I have,
If I do wrong your children dear,
When you are laid in grave."

The parents being dead and gone,
The children home he takes,
And brings them straight unto his house,
Where much of them he makes.
He had not kept these pretty babes
A twelvemonth and a day,
But, for their wealth, he did devise
To make them both away.

He bargain'd with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take the children
And slay them in a wood : [young,
He told his wife an artful tale,
He would the children send
To be brought up in fair London,
With one that was his friend.

Away then went those pretty babes,
Rejoicing at that tide,
Rejoicing with a merry mind
They should on cock-horse ride.
They prate and prattle pleasantly,
As they rode on the way,
To those that should their butchers be,
And work their lives' decay :

So that the pretty speech they had
Made Murder's heart relent;
And they that undertook the deed
Full sore did now repent.
Yet one of them, more hard of heart,
Did vow to do his charge,
Because the wretch that hired him
Had paid him very large.

The other won't agree thereto,
So then they fell to strife ;
With one another they did fight
About the children's life :
And he that was of mildest mood,
Did slay the other there,
Within an unfrequented wood ;
The babes did quake for fear !

He took the children by the hand,
Tears standing in their eye,
And bade them straightway follow him,
And look they did not cry.
And two long miles he led them on,
While they for food complain :
"Stay here," quoth he, "I'll bring you
When I come back again." [bread,

These pretty babes, with hand in hand,
Went wandering up and down :
But never more they saw the man
Approaching from the town :
Their pretty lips with blackberries
Were all besmear'd and dyed,
And when they saw the darksome night
They sat them down and cried.

Thus wander'd these two pretty babes,
Till death did end their grief,
In one another's arms they died,
As wanting due relief :
No burial these pretty babes
Of any man receives,
Till Robin-red-breast painfully
Did cover them with leaves.

And now the heavy wrath of God
Upon their uncle fell ;
Yea, fearful fiends did haunt his house,
His conscience felt an hell : [sumed,
His barns were fired, his goods con-
His lands were barren made,
His cattle died within the field,
And nothing with him staid.

And in the voyage to Portugal
Two of his sons did die ;
And, to conclude, himself was brought
To want and misery :
He pawn'd and mortgaged all his land
Ere seven years came about.
And now at length this wicked act
Did by this means come out :

The fellow that did take in hand
These children for to kill,
Was for a robbery judged to die—
Such was God's blessed will :
Who did confess the very truth,
As here hath been display'd :
Their uncle having died in gaol,
Where he for debt was laid.

You that executors be made,
And overseers eke,
Of children that be fatherless
And infants mild and meek,
Take you example by this thing,
And yield to each his right,
Lest God with such-like misery
Your wicked minds requite.



NEVER MIND THE LAUGH OF FOOLS.

From the German of A. L. Grimm. Translated by Madame de Chatelain.

A TORTOISE once lived near a lake, and a very pleasant dwelling it turned out, for it was surrounded by woods and meadows, where she found all that was necessary to support life. As she lived alone, and far from all other tortoises, she had formed an intimacy with two wild ducks, who likewise dwelt on the shore of the lake, and returned there every night to sleep. During the day they swam about on the lake, and picked up their nourishment in its slime.

It happened one year that there was a very dry summer, during which there was a scarcity of rain for a considerable period; so by degrees the lake that the tortoise inhabited was quite dried up, and each day she was obliged to put up with a smaller space, because the water daily diminished. And when the lake had diminished down to the dimensions of a puddle, so that the frogs that inhabited it could skip from one shore to the other, the two ducks came one day to the tortoise and said, "We have bethought ourselves during the night what we had better do. The water and the slime are daily diminishing, and the lake cannot afford us any longer a livelihood, for the little worms are all dying gradually for want of moisture. We have, therefore, agreed to leave this spot to-day, and to go and seek elsewhere for a dwelling; we therefore come to bid you farewell, and to thank you for the friendly intercourse we have enjoyed with you, and for your kind, neighbourly offices."

On hearing these words the tortoise grew very sad, and she gave way to her grief in the following lamentations:—"Alas! what an unhappy creature am I, to be thus forsaken by Heaven! How much happier are you birds than our species! When any spot ceases to please you, or is no longer able to nourish you, you take your flight up into the air, and the whole world lies spread out beneath you, and you can inspect it from on high; and wherever you see a place that takes your fancy, you have nothing to do but to come down and fix your dwelling where you like. How different and how much less pleasant a fate is ours! We are destined to crawl upon the earth, just like the worms, and can see nothing but what lies quite near us; and if we dislike a place, or if it cease to furnish us with the necessaries of life, we are not free to rise above the earth, and look down to seek for one that would please us better. We can only proceed at a snail's gallop, and it depends more on chance than on our own exertions whether we manage to reach a spot that affords us the indispensable necessities of life, before we sink with hunger and thirst. And then we must take up with what we happen to find. Alas!" continued she, "what is to become of me? The lake will dry up completely, and with it my life must fail; for we tortoises are accustomed from our youth to spend half our existence in water, even more than you aquatic fowls; for you may be said to be able to live in three elements. You swim in the water, soar in the air, and walk upon earth; but as to me, Lord help me! I can only move about in water, for on land I can get on but slowly. My death is therefore certain, for

there is no water for a long way around. I have in my time been some distance about the neighbourhood, and no water was anywhere to be seen: and weak and ill as I now am from the failure of the waters and the heat of the sun, I am little able to run about still further. I know I should faint away before I had gone many steps; and now I shall not even have the comfort of seeing my friends about me, to solace and advise me."

On hearing how desperate was their friend's situation, both the ducks were moved to compassion, and they said to her, "If we were able to help you, sure we would do so with all our hearts."

"Oh, do take pity on me, and don't leave me here to die thus lonely and unbefriended!" said the tortoise. "Carry me with you through the air. I am not so very heavy; and as there are two of you, it might surely be managed."

"But how shall we accomplish it?" asked one duck of the other.

"Why," interrupted the tortoise quickly, "if you keep close together, I can then sit half on the back of one and half on the back of the other. Then if you take your flight, and mind and fly quite equally, I may easily be carried by you both."

"No, no! that will never do," said the ducks; "for how should we be able to flap our wings if you were sitting upon them? And how could we fly so close to each other? We should only beat one another down to the ground, and you would slip down between us twenty times over."

"Then there is no hope for me!" cried the tortoise; and nearly concealing her entire head in her scaly case, she wept bitterly.

The ducks were again moved to pity, and held council together for a good while, when at last they said to the tortoise:—"Be of good cheer, neighbour; we have hit on an expedient for carrying you away."

The tortoise popped her head out of her scales again, and inquired, joyfully:—"How so? How will you manage it? I will be grateful to you as long as I live."

"We have turned the matter over," said the ducks, "and we have found out what to do. It is not that you are too heavy, but the difficulty is, how to take hold of you firmly, without hurting you. Your horny scales are too thick, and we couldn't open our beaks wide enough to hold you firmly by them. Then nothing remains but your head, and feet, and tail, and we could not take hold of any of these solidly enough without hurting you. We have, therefore, thought of the following means. We will hold a stick

at each end in our beaks, and you will bite firmly into the middle, and support yourself by your teeth, and thus we can carry you with us as we fly up into the air with the stick. It is true we shan't be able to enjoy any friendly chat on our way, and you too must keep very quiet, for if one of us was to let the stick go, you would of course fall to the ground."

The tortoise was highly delighted with this scheme, and so the ducks flew away to look for a lake which should become their future residence ; and when they returned they brought with them a stick, the end of which each duck grasped in her beak : they then stooped down to the tortoise, who readily bit into the middle of the stick ; and the ducks having taken a still firmer hold, up they flew, and directed their course to the well-supplied inland lake that they had chosen for their dwelling.

They had not gone far before they met a troop of magpies and other frivolous scoffers. When they saw how strangely the tortoise was carried through the air by her friends the two ducks, they burst into loud laughter, and flew all round them, and made game of her in all sorts of ways.

"So, mistress tortoise," said they, "how nimbly we fly through the air, forsooth ! and that, too, without wings ! And, prithee, why have you left your wings behind ?"

"But," observed another, "why do her eyes seem starting out of her head ?"

"She need not close her teeth till one row laps over the other," said a third ; "for though we fly too, yet we open and shut our beaks fast enough."

"Oh," cried they in a body, "I shouldn't care to fly if I must be dumb, and not enjoy any thing !"

These remarks chafed the tortoise exceedingly, still she remained silent. But the mischievous birds could see by her sparkling eyes that she was in a passion ; and highly delighted at their success, they kept calling out :—

"Birdie, birdie, light and gay,
Drop no feathers by the way ;
Taper are your legs and sleek,
And so elegant your beak !—
Sure your singing must be choice :
Come, let's hear your witching voice."

The tortoise could scarcely contain herself any longer, on hearing the magpies singing epigrams upon her, and her eyes flashed with rage.

But her tormentors only continued their gibes with fresh pertinacity, and sang :—

“ A tortoise there flies,
Who mounts to the skies.
Four legs, say,
Whither away ?
Scaly fowl,
Why dost scowl ?

Horny back, thou
Art angry, I trow !
Wings hast none,
Yet canst fly.
Speech too is gone,—
Prithee, say why ?”

The tortoise could not stand this in silence, and forgetting in her anger that her whole safety depended on holding fast with her teeth, she exclaimed in a tone of exasperation :—“ I am dumb in order to vex you ! I fly without wings in order to provoke you !”

But on saying these words she lost hold of the stick, and down she fell, and before the words were completely out of her mouth she had already reached the earth below. Unluckily she lit upon a rock ; and her fall was so hard, that it broke her scales and caused her death.

The two ducks rose higher in the air on losing the weight that clogged their flight ; and when they heard the tortoise speak, and saw her fall and die on the rock, they mourned their excellent friend, and let fall the stick on which they had uplifted her and flew away to the lake, where they took up their abode, and often wished the tortoise were alive again, and with them ; and then they would say to each other, “ She was such a good, hearty neighbour ! What a pity she was not wise enough to despise the laugh of fools !”

ENIGMA.

CAN you guess what flower am I,
That in the spangled mead do lie ?
Seek for me in the unmown grass,
But over it lightly and softly pass ;
Seek for me first by the milkmaid's side,
When she milketh her kine at eventide ;
Seek for me next when little boys pout,
And nobody knows what 'tis all about :
Then hie thee down to the shady vale,
And you'll surely meet with a flow'ret pale.

THE INFANT NEPTUNE.

Designed by H. J. Townsend. Manufactured by Messrs. Minton.



THIS beautiful little ornament, designed by Mr. H. J. Townsend, is one of a series of Art Manufactures that are being produced under the superintendence of our friend, Felix Summerly. It is made in a beautiful kind of china called "Parian," from its resemblance to the old Parian marble, and is intended to be used either as a salt-cellar, or, with a water-lily in the shell, for a taper-stand.



HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle.

No. III.—THE GIUSTINIANI.

In the fifth century after the Christian era, when Italy was exposed to the continued invasion of the northern barbarians, a band of fugitives, closely pursued by Attila, the fierce king of the Huns, took refuge in the small swampy islands lying in the north-

western corner of the Adriatic sea. They found in this shelter the security which they needed. Whilst they rejoiced in the asylum afforded by their isolated position, they little dreamt that they were laying the foundation of one of the most wonderful and powerful states that have arisen in modern times.

As succeeding swarms from the “Northern hive” descended into Italy, they drove the affrighted inhabitants before them, who fled in crowds to the islands. They quickly formed themselves into a state, established a system of government, and elected a chief for life under the title of Doge. Gradually they erected houses and churches on the numerous little islands, and connected with bridges those which lay nearest to each other. A palace was erected for the doge, and the city of Venice claimed a place amongst the nations of Europe.

In the time of the Crusades, we find the Venetian amongst the wealthiest and most important of the Italian republics; already the Eastern ports were filled with her merchant vessels, and the pirates of Istria and the Greek coast, who infested the Adriatic and Levant, had learned to tremble at her name. Treaties and negotiations had been successfully entered into by several doges with the Greek emperor and the sultans of Constantinople and Egypt. As the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope was then unknown, all the Eastern luxuries, so much sought after by the sovereigns of the West, were to be transported to Venice, which thus became the great emporium of trade—the connecting link between the East and the West. When Christendom began to arm itself to drive out the Turks from the Holy City of Jerusalem, the scene of the life and death of our Saviour, Venice assumed a still higher position. She fitted out fleets manned by her bravest sons, and conducted by the doge himself. By her deeds of valour she gained, not the laurels alone, but the more substantial benefits of victory. We read, that after the capture of Acre, one quarter of the city was apportioned as her share of the booty, besides securing many most valuable commercial privileges and immunities. In A.D. 1122, a fleet of two hundred vessels sailed from her port, under the command of Domenico Michieli, the doge, by whose skill and bravery many Syrian cities were taken, and wealth and fame flowed in a full tide into the rising republic. These brilliant conquests, and the consequent increase of power, created for Venice many enemies; and amongst them, the Greek emperor regarded her with a jealous eye. Faithless as he was impolitic, Manuel Comnenus seized upon the

Venetians resident at the ports of Greece, and threw them into prison. Some few fortunately escaped, and bore the news to Venice. The Venetians, unused to such indignities, were incensed at the insulting conduct of the emperor. In a short time the streets were thronged with people, crying aloud for vengeance, and demanding to be led against their foe. The nobles and governors, no less eager to redeem their honour, arranged for an instant attack upon their treacherous enemy. Orders were issued for the equipment of a large armament, and although the coffers had been drained by recent wars, money was readily advanced by the nobles. Were we not acquainted with the internal arrangements of the Venetian arsenal, we might listen incredulously to the fact, that in three months one hundred and fifty galleys were ready for action; but Venice, recognising in her navy the most important element of her national safety, watched over it with the most jealous care. The arsenal was so capacious that it resembled a town: it was surrounded by solid walls and fortified by strong towers, so that it was capable of resisting the attacks of an enemy. Hundreds of workmen were constantly employed in building ships, and manufacturing every article necessary for their equipment—stores of arms and ammunition for a considerable army were always ready. Huge dismantled vessels filled the docks, which were surrounded by store-rooms of masts, cordage, anchors, and arms. Thus, the Venetians could never be found unprepared, and much of their naval glory and commercial prosperity is attributable to this forethought. The moment the expedition against the Greek emperor was decided on, the arsenal became the scene of incessant bustle and activity; day and night all hands were in requisition, for idleness in the service of the republic was deemed a crime. Every one capable of bearing arms sought admission into the ranks, and those who were compelled by age and infirmity to remain at home, bewailed their sad fate which left them useless to their country at such a crisis. Foremost in the expedition there was one family remarkable for its enthusiasm in the cause, the antiquity of its descent, and its sad fate. The family of the Giustiniani had frequently filled the highest offices of the state, and in worth and honour were unsurpassed by any of the Venetian aristocracy. Stung to the quick by the insult offered to their country, they swore to avenge it or die. Not a single member of this noble house could be prevailed on to remain behind; young and old, all insisted on their right to fight for their country. Thus was the armament freighted with the whole illustrious race of the Giustiniani. Rarely had such a noble fleet sailed

from Venice ; and whilst Manuel believed his enemies quailing before his imperial anger, they were already rapidly approaching his kingdom, thirsting for vengeance. The emperor, alarmed at this formidable fleet, pretended the deepest regret that such an insult should have been inadvertently given to his dear friends and allies, entreated them to grant him time to explain the affair, and promised to give them the most entire satisfaction. Had Manuel risked the chance of a battle, he would, most probably, have been entirely defeated ; for the Venetians were not only indignant at the insulting conduct of the emperor, but were possessed of great courage and much maritime skill. The wily emperor hoped, by deferring the attack, to gain time to rally his own forces, and allow the Venetian ardour to cool in the meantime. Deluded by his excuses and promises, they agreed to withdraw to Scio, and there abide the issue of the negotiations. It was a fatal step for them ; during the winter the plague broke out, the Venetians were attacked by the disease, and perished by hundreds : of all the brilliant array which a few months before had quitted Venice, elated by the prospects of speedy triumph, but few remained when spring returned, and this miserable remnant so feeble and dispirited, that all thought of pursuing the expedition was utterly abandoned. To conduct the remains of his panic-stricken army back to Venice was the doge's only aim ; but on mustering his followers, the number was found to be so small, that it was impossible to man all the galleys ; many were, therefore, burned, and the rest steered for the Adriatic. A deep gloom had settled on the survivors ; they had scarcely power left to work the vessels, as with heavy hearts they entered Venice. Their arrival spread dismay through her streets. Could the few shattered galleys, now slowly moving through the waters, be indeed all that remained of that proud armament which had so lately sailed forth triumphantly ?—where were the brave hearts that then beat high with hope ? Alas ! few returned to tell of all they had endured. Not a family but mourned the loss of some member, and wailing and sounds of sorrow re-echoed through the streets. In the Giustiniani palace there were proud matrons watching with anxious hearts the approach of that mournful fleet. Where was that self-devoted band of brothers, who had bound themselves to redeem their own and their country's honour ? All, all had perished—not one returned to tell the mournful tale ! They had died, not in the field of battle, freely and joyfully giving their life's blood for Venice, but miserably smitten down by the hot breath of pestilence, their proud hearts crushed beneath the languor of illness, far from their homes, and

their bones resting, unhonoured, on a foreign strand. The illustrious race of the **Giustiniani** seemed now extinct ; all its branches had united in the act of patriotic sacrifice, and all had perished. It was not, however, so decreed. In one of the monasteries of Venice, buried from sight and almost forgotten, resided a monk, whose life flowed on in one monotonous stream, and who scarcely cared to claim kindred with the family from whom he had for years been separated. At this moment, when annihilation threatened the noble stock, this solitary branch was remembered ; he was entreated to quit his cloister and return to the world ; a dispensation was obtained from the Pope, which freed him from his monastic vows—and, taking his station as head of his family, he became the regenerator of his race. The **Giustiniani** again rose to be powerful in the state, and the annals of Venice record the brave and wise exploits of senators and doges of that name.

The miseries of the unhappy expedition against the Greeks had not yet ended. The infection which had destroyed the army was conveyed to Venice by the returning vessels, and raged in her narrow canals and streets with a fury unparalleled ;—thousands perished daily, and the people, exasperated by the destruction of their fleet and army, and writhing under this new and heavy visitation, looked about for some victim on whom to wreak their vengeance. Unjustly attributing their disasters to the misrule of the doge, they surrounded his palace, dragged him forth, and murdered him in the public streets.





THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

No. IV.—OWLS.

OWLS are nocturnal birds of prey, and several peculiar characters shew how admirably they are fitted for the place which they take in creation. The pupils of their eyes are enormous, and admit so much light that they are dazzled by day, and are better able to distinguish objects at night. The eyes look forwards, and are surrounded by circles of feathers; the beak is curved the whole way, and the opening of the ears has, in almost every instance, a piece of skin going half round it, like what is called the flap or conch of a man's ear. The head is large, the skull thick, and hollow places in it most probably increase the power of hearing, which is very great, and capable of detecting the slightest sounds. The plumage is loose, soft, and fine, so that these birds make little or no noise when flying. They can bring their outer toe backwards or forwards as they please. They very seldom feed on dead prey, and eat small birds and mice, particularly preferring the latter, of which they devour immense numbers. When they have young, they will bring a mouse to the nest every twelve or fifteen minutes. They do not stop to pluck off hair or feathers from their prey, and

with the bones, these form lumps in the stomach, which they throw out by the mouth when they please. The ridiculous gestures of an owl are most laughable when attacked by day, or when it sees any thing new in a full light; and nothing can be more melancholy than its cry in the silence of the night: the sound heard so often near their nests, which has been taken for snoring, is only the cry of the young birds for food. These peculiarities, and especially the noiseless flight, which brings an owl close to you before you can be aware that it is even in existence, have probably caused the numerous superstitions respecting it, and which we find in most countries frequented by them. Among these is the idea that they foretell approaching death, and are said to look into the rooms of sick persons, and then converse with some one outside. Mr. Waterton, who is so learned in the habits of birds, and in fact of most other animals, and has written such interesting accounts of them, built a house for owls over a ruined gateway, close to his dwelling, and in spite of the fears of his neighbours, and their assertions that he would bring ruin and destruction on the whole place, has succeeded in rearing several families of them; so that he watches, and has made a number of interesting observations concerning them.

The colour of owls varies from white to a very dark brown, grey, and buff, and most are beautifully marked with small or large spots. The legs of the greater number are feathered to the toes, and several species have tufts of feathers, called egrets, just over their ears on the top of their head, which they can raise or depress at pleasure. Among these is the Grand Duke, the largest of all nocturnal birds of prey, which has a very wise and majestic appearance.

Owls inhabit most parts of the world, make their nests in ruins, high towers, and old trunks of trees, and that called the *Chat-huant* in France (in England, Screech-owl) often lays its eggs in the nests of other birds.

There is a prejudice against owls, from the story that they get into pigeon-houses and destroy the young birds; but Mr. Waterton thinks, in most of the instances which have been brought before him, that rats have been the murderers, and not the innocent owl. Certain it is, however, that all little birds have a great enmity towards owls, and will assemble in numbers, and fiercely attacking their foes, drive them away; for no creatures fight more fiercely than many small birds.

The owl was the favourite of the heathen goddess Minerva, and has, in consequence, been often called the bird of wisdom.

Notwithstanding which, it is a frequent saying that persons are as stupid as owls. On the ancient seals and rings, Minerva is constantly represented either with an owl by her side, or in a small car drawn by two of these birds. In several of the fables of heathen times we find offenders punished by being turned into owls. Among these was Ascalaphus, who was desired by Pluto to watch Proserpine after he had run away with her and taken her to his kingdom. She was to be restored to her mother, provided she had not eaten any thing in Pluto's dominions ; and when she was anxious to conceal that she had done so, in order to get away, Ascalaphus said that he had seen her eat some pomegranate seeds. This made Proserpine so angry that she sprinkled some water over him from the river Phlegethon, and turned him into an owl.

A young lady, who lived in the country, had an owl brought to her by the gardener, which had been lamed by some accident ; she petted this bird, made it a sort of nest in an old apple-tree, and fed it every day : she did all in her power to tame it, sat in the apple-tree with it, trying to make it understand all her kindness, but it continued fierce and unsociable till the last few days of its life, when it appeared, after two months' trial, to know and expect her : but one morning when she arrived at the tree she found it lying dead on the ground. A friend, who saw how sorry she was to lose her pet, skinned and stuffed it for her ; but there were no birds' eyes to be had in the next town, and the only substitute for them were two black cut-glass beads belonging to the young lady's mother. These were inserted, and the owl was placed on a bracket in the dining-room. Some weeks after, when at dinner, a guest, who was laughing at the ridiculous appearance of the owl, which appeared to be looking all ways at once, owing to its strange eyes, exclaimed, "The bird is come to life again !" All looked up in astonishment, and beheld the feathers move. The young lady rushed to her favourite, mounted a chair, and found the owl teeming with life which was not its own, for it was full of maggots. The inexperienced stuffer had not sufficiently prepared the skin, and the end of the owl was a watery grave ; for it was thrown into the river before the house, as the quickest mode of getting rid of it and its devourers.



Myrtil and Chloe.

MYRTIL AND CHLOE.

A Pastoral in one Act.—From the French of Florian.—By Robert Snow, Esq.

PROLOGUE.

OLD CHRISTMAS, in long stockings, and round hose,
 Cross-garters, high-peaked hat, and doublet close,
 Is coming through the rawish, dark, dank night:—
 Yet what cares He? He is all joy and light!
 He calls but once a-year; and now is come:—
 Listen; he knocks! *Come in! we're all at home;*
Come in! Now not alone will we regale
 Our Visitor with mince-pie, wine, and ale,
 But with a Play! and, kinglike, he shall sit
 In our best box; the groundlings in the pit.
 But come, be frank; what think you of our Stage?
 Our Actors too are of a pretty age;
 Pretty, and apt soft feignings to conceive;
 For children ever love to make believe.
 Nay, there be children of a larger growth,
 Men, who to make believe are nothing loth
 In Theatres:—turn they to children then?
 Or shall we children grow to-night to men?
 No matter. But thus plead we for our Show:
 That sport most pleases which doth least know how.
 Yet hope we, not to perish in our birth;
 Although, confounded, we might make you mirth.
 You must imagine in this narrow room,
 Arcadia's ancient scenes, and pastoral bloom.
 In this our Play's dependence chiefly lies;
 Breathing Arcadia's air, the critic dies.

CHARACTERS.

MYRTIL, a Shepherd,
 LYSIS, a Priest of Love.
 LAMON, an Old Shepherd.

¶ A young Priest attendant on Lysis.
 The God of Love.
 CHLOE, a Shepherdess.

SCENE—Arcadia.

SCENE—*A Pastoral Landscape. Before a Temple, in Arcadia.*

Enter MYRTIL and CHLOE meeting: MYRTIL hearing a nest of turtle-doves, and CHLOE a crook adorned with flowers.

Myrtile. My dearest Chloe, are you already risen? Whither are you bound so early in the morning?

Chloe. I was going to look for you, my dearest Myrtile. It seems a great while since we parted, and yet it was but yesterday evening.

Myrtile. O, what a beautiful crook that is! I never saw you with it before. Who gave you that, Chloe?

Chloe. That's a secret, Myrtile. But O, what pretty doves those are! You never told me whereabouts their nest was. Whom are they for, Myrtile?

Myrtile. That's a secret, Chloe!

Chloe. How you are looking at my crook!

Myrtile. How you are looking at my doves!

Chloe. Well, my dearest Myrtile, I will tell you all about it.

Myrtile. And as for me, I will hide nothing from Chloe.

Chloe. This is a present for you.

Myrtile. These are a present for you.

Chloe. Listen. For a whole month have I been working at this crook. The wood is very hard, and my hands are very weak; but because I was working for you, Myrtile, I was determined no one should help me. Besides, look here! I have cut in the bark, at the top of the crook, your initials. They are the only letters I know how to write. Yesterday evening it was quite finished, and I could scarcely sleep all night for joy. With the first song of the lark I rose to gather flowers to hang on the crook, and meant to lay it at the door of your cot. But it was in vain that I rose betimes; Myrtile was up before me. In vain I try to keep anything from him; he knows all my little secrets as soon as I do myself.

Myrtile. And what do you think, Chloe? A fortnight ago I found this doves' nest in the little wood on the side of the hill; but the birds had built on the top of a young oak too weak to bear my weight. So what did I? Why, I fastened one end of a cord to the leading shoot of the young oak, as high as my hands could reach, and the other end to the root of a neighbouring tree. Every day I went and shortened the cord, and every day the nest was brought nearer and nearer to me, without the tree breaking, or the birds discovering what I was about. All this time the young doves were growing, and my hopes growing with them. But when the nest was brought low enough for me to reach, I took it, and was going to set it at the door of your cot. But I don't know how it is, Chloe; we are sure to meet; and it's of no use planning a surprise for you.

Chloe. Well, my dearest Myrtile, let us suppose our mutual intentions to have succeeded. Take you this crook, and give me your turtle-doves.

MYRTIL takes the crook, and gives CHLOE the dores.

Myrtil. Ah, Chloe ! all the shepherds will envy me the possession of this crook ; and I shall say to them, *You would envy me still more, if you knew who gave it me.*

Chloe. Your turtles are charming, dearest Myrtil ; they are as white as the lily you gave me the other day, and as sweet as yourself.

Myrtil. Well, my dearest Chloe, promise me never to part from them.

Chloe. With all my heart ! But you must promise me, in turn, never to part with my crook.

Myrtil. Listen to me, Chloe. Here is the Temple of Love. Within that Temple receive my promise, and give me yours.

Chloe. No, Myrtil ; my mother has forbidden me to enter it, excepting under her guidance. I cannot disobey my mother.

Myrtil. You are right, Chloe. I, for my own part, would rather die than disobey my father. But without entering the Temple, here, where we stand, we can swear, in the hearing of the God of Love, never to part with these dear and precious gifts.

Chloe. Very well ; I agree : but we must not swear ; we are not old enough for that.

MYRTIL kneels, and turns towards the Temple of Love.

Myrtil. O tender Love ! Ruler of all Nature ! do thou render Myrtil the most unfortunate of Shepherds if he ever parts with this dear crook. I am yet too young to have a flock of my own ; this crook is my sole treasure : but when I am older, my father has promised me twelve goats, and this crook shall guide them ; and when I shall have grown an old man, like my father, this crook shall sustain my feeble steps. So, in youth and in age, this crook shall be the dearest thing I have.

CHLOE kneels, and turns towards the Temple of Love.

Chloe. O Love ! terrible Deity ! do thou suffer thy vengeance to fall on the head of hapless Chloe, if ever willingly I part with these birds that Myrtil gave me. They are young, and so am I ; but they and I will grow old together : they in loving one another ; I in loving my dearest Myrtil.

Myrtil. Thanks, thanks, dearest Chloe ! But I see Lysis, the Priest of Love, approaching. How sadly he looks ! I fear he is about to relate to us some afflicting news.

Enter Lysis, with a young attendant Priest.

Lysis. My dear Myrtile, I can hardly refrain from tears at the news I bring you.

Myrtile. Ah, Lysis ! I tremble at your words ! I trust you do not bring me any bad tidings of my father ? I have more fears for him than for myself.

Lysis. Your father woke this morning with a burning fever upon him. The unfortunate old man, weak with age, and bowed down with suffering, lies at death's door.

Myrtile. O heavens ! my father will be snatched from me. (*Weps.*) Wretched, wretched Myrtile ! My father is ill—dying perhaps—without my having embraced him. Lysis ! Chloe ! pray to all the Gods—pray to the God of Love—to restore the best of fathers to me. I cannot remain with you—I must go—must run to visit my poor father !

[*Exit.*]

Chloe. Ah, Lysis ! you, who are Love's minister—you, through whom that puissant Deity informs us with his will, ask, obtain of him the recovery of Menaleas—obtain of him that the most virtuous of our shepherds may long live to instruct his children in the ways of virtue.

Lysis. Is it the mere love of virtue that makes you take so tender an interest in the father of Myrtile ?

Chloe. No sentiment is so just, so sweet, as that of gratitude. You know not what I owe to the good Menaleas. When that terrible hail-storm last year destroyed all our little harvest, Menaleas replaced what we had lost, twice over. Since that day, my mother and I have never retired to rest without invoking a blessing on the name of Menaleas. Ah, Lysis ! join your vows to mine : supplicate the God of Love to restore us our benefactor !

Lysis. Vows, Chloe, suffice not. The Gods will have sacrifice.

Chloe. Alas ! I have no offering to present. My mother keeps no flock : had we but one single lamb, I would already have run to fetch it.

Lysis. Whose are these two turtle-doves ?

Chloe. Mine.

Lysis. Turtles are the birds of Love. Whenever I wish to propitiate the Deity, it is my custom to sacrifice a pair of them on his altar.

Chloe. What, Lysis ! do you imagine that in sacrificing these birds I could obtain the recovery of Menaleas ?

Lysis. It were clearly the surest method.



Chloe. O my poor turtles ! You are condemned to die. Alas, alas ! I had hoped—I had promised—never to part from you. But for Menaleas—for the father of Myrtile—for my benefactor ! Yes, gratitude should outweigh all selfish considerations. Poor, poor birds ! I must weep over you, but I am not able to save you. [Much affected.]

Lysis. Well, are you decided ?

Chloe. Yes, yes ; I am.

Lysis. Then we must not lose a moment. Come with me, and assist at the sacrifice.

Chloe. No, Lysis, no : spare me that spectacle. Here are my turtle-doves ; I deliver them up to you. Kill them, if through their

death Menaleas may recover. But let me be absent. Let me go and weep alone, at a distance from Love's altar. (*Weeps.*) O, if you did but know how dear these birds are to me ! If you did but know from whom I received them, and the promise I gave ! But the God of Love knows it ; he reads it in my heart ; and the more grievous this sacrifice is to me, doubtless the more beneficial will it be to Menaleas. Farewell, Lysis ! I must needs weep, and my sobs would but interrupt your prayers. Farewell, ye too, hapless birds ! farewell ! Ye cannot suffer more than I now endure. [She kisses the turtle-doves, put them into the hands of Lysis, and Exit.]

Lysis. O virtuous Chloe ! thy mother ought to be a happy woman ; and proud, indeed, of such a child as thou ! But I see Myrtile advancing yonder. (*He addresses the attendant Priest, and*

puts the doves into his hands.) Go and wait for me at the Temple, and make ready the fire upon the altar.

[*Exit the attendant Priest, bearing the doves.*
Enter MYRTIL.

Myrtel. I have been seeking for you, Lysis; come and rejoice with me, for there is hope that my dear father will be restored to us.

Lysis. Would to Heaven he were! But tell me, what power has interposed in his behalf?

Myrtel. He was almost at the last gasp when I arrived at his bedside. My brothers were all kneeling about his couch, lifting their hands to heaven. I burst into the midst of them, and threw my arms about his dear neck! Whereupon he began to come to himself, and rallied all his remaining strength to press me to his bosom. *You are come then, Myrtel?* said he. *I could not have died in peace had you remained absent.* I could only reply by pressing him to my breast, and sobbing aloud. But on a sudden, some God seemed to have inspired me with a thought. I recollect to have heard you speak of an ancient shepherd named Lamon, who lives in a cave on the summit of the mountain that overlooks our pastures,



who is reported to have learnt of Apollo himself the art of curing all manner of sickness.

Lysis. I know not if he be still alive.

Myrtile. Well, I tore myself from my father's arms. I ascended the mountain, and made all the caves re-echo with calling on the name of Lamon. I found him at last, seated under an aged oak, sorting the simples he had that morning been gathering on the mountain wilds. I threw myself at his feet. *My father is dying,* I cried aloud; *save him, save him, by your art!* Lamon answered me as follows, as nearly as I can recollect his words: *My son, it is my profession to do good. I will do all that I can to cure your father; and if the God Apollo grants me success, I will receive no other guerdon of you than the crook which you carry in your hand: and I will hang it up, as a votive offering, upon an ancient bay-tree that I have consecrated to Apollo.*

Lysis. Lamon is always himself. His piety towards the Gods equals his charity towards his fellow-creatures.

Myrtile. Most true. But, alas! in asking for my crook, he asked me for the dearest treasure I possess. That crook was the gift of my dear shepherdess, and I made a vow to die rather than part from it. But no: not even my vow, nor my crook, nor my shepherdess herself, are so dear to me as my father. On hearing Lamon's words, I kept down my tears; I even forced a smile; and though I would rather have yielded up ten years of my life, yet without a murmur I yielded up my crook into the hands of Lamon.

Lysis. And will Lamon restore Menalcas to health?

Myrtile. Lamon saw him—questioned him—and examined him in profound silence. At length he bade us hope. We fell on our knees, and would have adored him like a divinity. Lamon was himself affected to tears. He required us all to leave the apartment, and remained alone in attendance on my father. I profited by this opportunity; and came to announce the good tidings to you, and to ask you to make interest with the Gods for our success.

Lysis. I will to the Temple. I must there perform a sacrifice that will make you shed tears of gratitude when you shall have learnt who it was that offered it. [Exit.]

Myrtile. Ah, Lysis! I will accompany you. But here comes Chloe. I wish her to hear of my happiness, and partake in my joy.

Enter CHLOE.

Chloe. I know all, my dearest Myrtile. I have just come from your father's house. I have seen Lamon—have spoken with him—his hopes are strengthened every hour.

Myrtile. Ah, my dearest Chloe ! to hear this from your sweet lips, makes the good news ten times the sweeter.

Chloe. O Myrtile, it was you that saved your father : it was you that thought of seeking out Lamon in his retirement on the mountain-top. I would fain love you more and more for this : but my poor little heart has already done its utmost, and, I fear, can do no more. But, Myrtile, what has become of your crook ?

Myrtile. Of my crook ?

[*In confusion.*]

Chloe. Yes. Have you lost it ?

Myrtile. No, indeed I have not.

Chloe. Surely, you have not given it away ?

Myrtile. Why, yes, I have.

[*In confusion.*]

Chloe. Had any other than yourself told me so, Myrtile, I would not have believed it.

Myrtile. Ah, Chloe, if you did but know all !—But what have you done with your nest of turtles ?

Chloe. They are no longer mine.

[*Weeps.*]

Myrtile. Why, what has become of them ?

Chloe. They are about to be killed, even now.

[*Weeps.*]

Myrtile. And what barbarous hand would do such a deed ?

Chloe. The deed is mine.

Myrtile. Yours, Chloe ?

Chloe. Yes. I gave the birds to Lysis, to sacrifice them to the God of Love, to propitiate the divinity to accord us your father's recovery.

Myrtile. O my dearest Chloe ! I breathe again. You are a thousand times more dear to me than before ; and never—never—

[*Pauses from emotion.*]

Chloe. And did not you offer up my crook to the God of Love ?

Myrtile. No. But Lamon demanded it of me, on the condition of his intercession with the God of Love for my father's recovery. Could I refuse it, Chloe ? O, no ! I hid my grief—bestowed one kiss upon my beautiful crook—and delivered it over to Lamon.

Chloe. Ah, how you have comforted me, Myrtile ! I do believe you have discovered the only means there were in the world of making me love you yet more dearly than before.

Myrtile. I have done no more than my duty. But my crook was so beautiful !

Chloe. I would have laid down my life for Menalcas. But what charming pets my turtle-doves were !

Myrtile. Although our consciences approve of what we have

done, how is it that we cannot suppress a murmur? Murmuring is not only wrong, but now all too late; for the turtles are already sacrificed—the crook is already consecrated to Apollo: we shall never see either one or the other more.

Enter LAMON, LYSIS, and the attendant Priest, bearing the turtle-doves and the crook.

Lamon. Yes, my virtuous and tender-hearted children, you shall see them once more. The God of Love restores you both your offerings. I, Lamon, the physician, who by the help of Apollo restored your father to his wonted health, will take no guerdon in earnest of my services. Lysis has told me all. He was officiating in the Temple, and was on the point of sacrificing the doves, with the sacred knife in his hand just about to be stained with their blood, when, on a sudden, a sweet low voice issued, as it seemed, from the statue of the God of Love. *Go, it said; go, carry back to the young shepherdess Chloe, the tender birds she has offered up to me. Tell her that, without the completion of that sacrifice, Menalcas shall be restored to health. Go, assure Chloe, and assure Myrtile, that I watch over their destinies; that they shall speedily be united; and that I will render them as happy as I render all those, who, whilst they reverence me, reverence virtue.*

Myrtile. Ah, Chloe!

Chloe. Ah, Myrtile!

Lamon. Lysis will confirm my words, that it was at the very moment that the voice ceased, that I arrived with the tidings of the perfect recovery of Menalcas; and brought Myrtile's crook with me, and put it into the hands of Lysis. Be thankful, all; the Gods have shewn much mercy.

Lysis. Be thankful, all; and never fail your loves.

Take back your crook: [to MYRTILE]. Take back your turtle-doves [to CHLOE].

'Tis duty's path alone (of this be sure,)

Conducts to happiness that may endure.

Would ye, his Votaries, this more clearly prove,

Accept an omen from the God of Love!

[LYSIS withdraws the curtain of the Temple and discovers the statue of the God of Love, bearing in his right hand a flaming torch, and holding a scroll in his left with the names thereon of MYRTILE and CHLOE, in letters of gold, encircled with wreaths of myrtle, orange-flower, and white roses.

[*Exeunt.*

SEPTEMBER.

By Mary Roberts.

WELL, this is a sight worthy of a holiday ! You, Charles, have never been in the country at the threshing season, and Augustus is just arrived from the land of rock-giants and icebergs. What a cheerful scene !—the large old barn, with its wide doors thrown open, and apple-trees beyond, loaded with ripe fruit ; threshers eagerly at work ; winnowing going on in the open space, and a heap of corn piled upon the floor. I love to listen to the sound of the flying flail, to watch the dividing of the chaff from the wheat ; the bringing out from its rough close husk that brown ripe grain, with which so many interesting associations are connected.

The barn itself is well worth noticing. Close at the furthest end grows a fine walnut-tree, of which the branches droop over a pond where ducks resort ; pigeons are flying in and out of the ample dove-house affixed to the wall ; and waiting patiently before the open door, in expectation of a few chance grains, is a fine barn-door fowl, with a family of half-grown chickens. Truly an English homestead seems to betoken peace and abundance. Look about you, playmates ; you have never seen any thing of the kind before. All round the farm-yard are cow-pens, with their unwieldy occupants—quiet, meditative creatures, chewing the cud and looking as if all pleasant and soothing memories were within them, of green fields and clear streams, and thoughts of sweet fresh hay, should snow lie deep upon the ground. Yet, meditative as they seem, when Tom the farmer's boy passes beneath a trailing load, with which to fill the racks, first one and then another stretches out her neck to catch a sweet morsel.

Holloa, here they come ! what a brotherhood of pigs, rushing full tilt from the wood, and scampering headlong to the sty, grunting as they run ! They must have heard Tom's voice speaking to the cows, and this has brought them in such a wondrous hurry. Here, too, is Chanticleer, with his feathery dames ; the old turkey-cock, gobbling and strutting with his helpmate, a fantastic, consequential sort of personage ; and waddling and quacking, a company of ducks from off the pool. Tom is a great favourite with all his master's dependants, whether four-legged or feathered, and the sound of his voice reminds them of the evening meal.

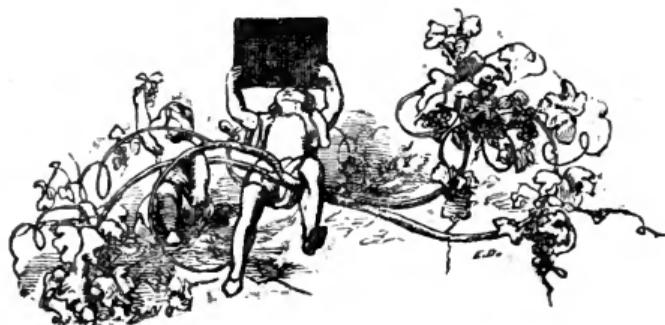
Now let us go into the barn and watch the threshing; the men will not leave work for some time, and there is plenty of room for us.

My father was some years since in Palestine, and he told me that the ancient custom of treading out the corn with oxen, instead of threshing, still prevailed in the East. A smooth flat piece of ground was selected for the purpose, and across it a primitive-looking machine, with a wooden chair, on which a man sat, was driven backwards and forwards among the sheaves, till they were broken into small pieces. The whole was then collected into a heap, and shaken against the wind by means of a small shovel, the chaff flying rapidly away, while the corn remained. You, Charles, who are better acquainted with the practices of ancient than modern husbandmen, can repeat the passage in Homer, which aptly describes this custom:

"As with autumnal harvest cover'd o'er,
And thick bestow'n, lies Ceres' sacred floor;
When round and round, with never-wearied pain,
The trampling steers beat out the unnumber'd grain."

Horace, too, speaks of the same custom. He tells us that the threshing-floor was generally a level, smooth area, enclosed by mud walls, with a garner on one side.

How brightly shines the setting sun into the barn, tingeing every object with a golden hue! The flying flails, the workmen, the heap of corn, even the old winnowing machine, seem as if a sudden change had passed upon them. One round more and the work is done. The threshers are preparing to depart, and we must be gone.





LESBIA.

From a Drawing by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In vain my Lesbia weeps: those tears are vain—
Thy piping charmer rests for ever mute.
No sighs, nor tears, can him restore again
To sing responsive to thy tender lute.



THE HORSE CHESNUT.

THIS tree, which is originally a native of the East, has not very long been naturalized in England. Its introduction here has been solely owing to its beauty, in which, at the flowering season, it certainly excels every other tree of its bulk that bears our climate. In early spring it puts forth large buds, which burst into verdure among the first greens that enliven the year; and its ample palmated leaves have an appearance both uncommon and handsome. Not long after, it puts forth its long upright spikes of white and variegated flowers, generally in such number as to cover the whole tree, and give it the resemblance of one gigantic *bouquet*. No flowering shrub is rendered more gay by its blossoms than this tall tree; hence it combines beauty with grandeur, in a degree superior to any other vegetable of these climates. The head is also shapely and regular in its growth, and well adapted to the symmetry

required in walks and avenues. It has the defect of changing and losing its leaves early in autumn, the natural consequence of its early spring verdure. It is also accused of not well resisting tempestuous winds. The wood of the horse-chesnut is of little value; it is, however, of some use to the turner. Its fruit or nuts are of a farinaceous quality, but so bitter as to be unfit for human food. Deer are said to be fond of them, and sheep will eat them; and when boiled, they have been used to fatten poultry. When left to decay, they turn into a kind of jelly, which has been employed like soap in washing linen. The bark has considerable astringency, and may be used for tanning leather.



THE WOLF AND THE KID.

A VERY stupid wolf (they are not all so) found a strayed kid. "Little friend," said the rapacious animal, "I have met you very seasonably; you shall make me a delightful supper, for I have neither breakfasted nor dined to-day." "If it must be so," said the kid, "grant me at least one small favour. I have heard say that you are a perfect musician; give me, I pray thee, a song before I die." The foolish wolf agreed to the request, but in attempting to sing he began to howl in a most horrid manner, which immediately drew the shepherd with his dogs to the spot, and he was obliged to take to flight with all speed. "Very well," said he to himself as he ran away, "this will teach me a good lesson: I see now that I had better confine myself to the trade of a butcher, instead of imitating that of a musician."

THE BEAR AND THE CHILDREN.

FROM ANDERSEN'S "PICTURE-BOOK WITHOUT PICTURES."

Translated by Meta Taylor.

I WILL tell you a circumstance which occurred a year ago, in a country town in the south of Germany. The master of a dancing-bear was sitting in the tap-room of an inn, eating his supper; whilst the bear, poor harmless beast! was tied up behind the wood-stack in the yard.

In the room upstairs three little children were playing about. Tramp, tramp! was suddenly heard on the stairs: who could it be? The door flew open, and enter—the bear, the huge, shaggy beast with his clanking chain! Tired of standing so long in the yard alone, Bruin had at length found his way to the staircase. At first the little children were in a terrible fright at this unexpected visit, and each ran into a corner to hide himself. But the bear found them all out, and put his muzzle, snuffling, up to them, but did not harm them in the least. He must be a big dog, thought the children; and they began to stroke him familiarly. The bear stretched himself out at his full length upon the floor, and the youngest boy rolled over him, and nestled his curly head in the shaggy, black fur of the beast. Then the eldest boy went and fetched his drum, and thumped away on it with might and main; whereupon the bear stood erect upon his hind legs, and began to dance. What glorious fun! Each boy shouldered his musket; the bear must of course have one too, and he held it tight and firm, like any soldier. There's a comrade for you, my lads! and away they marched—one, two,—one, two!

The door suddenly opened, and the children's mother entered. You should have seen her—speechless with terror, her cheeks white as a sheet, and her eyes fixed with horror. But the youngest boy nodded with a look of intense delight, and cried, "Mamma, we are only playing at soldiers!"

At that moment the master of the bear appeared.



CHRIST AFTER HIS CRUCIFIXION.

ALBERT DURER, the author of this picture, was one of the earliest and most famous of the artists of Germany. He was the son and grandson of a goldsmith, but he left his father's craft in his sixteenth year, to become a student of painting under Michael Wolgemuth, and a most indefatigable artist in all branches of art up to the time of his death. We find his well-known monogram on paintings, sculptures, engravings, etchings (which process he is said to have invented), drawings on wood, ornamental designs of all kinds. Albert Durer was born on the 20th May, 1471, and died April 6, 1528, in the fifty-seventh year of his age. Nurenberg was the place of his birth and of his death.—FELIX SUMMERLY.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle.

No. IV.—GUSTAVUS VASA.

THE title of Hero is one which has by general consent been given to men whose military deeds and success in battle have rendered them famous; to such we may yield the palm of valour, skill, and personal courage; but the name of hero should alone be given to men who unite to these other and, as it seems to me, far nobler attributes. He alone is worthy of a hero's fame whose motives are high and pure; who, revolting from scenes of bloodshed and slaughter, takes up the sword in defence of his country's rights and liberties, whose actions have nobler aims than selfish ambition or worldly glory, and who fights that others may live in security and peace. Such we rarely find amongst the warriors of antiquity. Alexander of Macedon, Julius Cæsar, Xerxes, and, in modern times, Napoleon, scrupled not to shed the blood of thousands of their fellowmen, to add one province to their empire. But history's "ample page" records many examples of heroes truly worthy of that high name, and such a one was Gustavus Vasa, the subject of our present sketch.

Sweden was one of those northern countries which remained in a semi-civilised state long after the more southern provinces of Europe had assumed a regular form of government, and adopted the manners and usages belonging to a more advanced state of society. In A.D. 1388, the thrones of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway were united in the person of Margaret Waldemar, the ambitious wife of Haguin king of Norway, and daughter of Waldemar king of Sweden, who from her talent and daring has been called the Semiramis of the North. She convoked at Calmar an assembly of the nobles of the three nations, and appointing her successor, claimed for him the crowns of all the kingdoms. Charmed with her eloquence and grace, they yielded a ready assent, and ratified the famous treaty of Calmar, by which these northern states were declared indissolubly united. As long as the powerful hand of Margaret held the reins of government all went on smoothly; but under her successor the strong national antipathies which had been repressed for a time burst forth with increased violence. The Swedes revolted, and, declaring themselves independent of Denmark, elected a sovereign from their own nation.

In the bosom of the community however lurked one who, beneath his archbishop's robes, concealed a traitor's heart. Gustavus Trolle, the primate of Upsal, had found in Christiern the Second of Denmark an able abettor of his own ambitious views, and yielded a ready ear to his proposal of delivering Sweden once more into the hands of a foreign ruler. Christiern's tyrannical temper led him to oppress all who came within his power; raised by the perfidy of the archbishop to the throne of Sweden, he scrupled not to imbrue his hands in the blood of those who opposed his elevation, and endeavoured to secure his newly acquired crown by the sacrifice of the principal nobles of the realm. The cruelty of this act was heightened by the base treachery which accompanied it: he proclaimed a grand banquet in honour of his accession to the throne; and when mirth and festivity had disarmed suspicion, a band of soldiers rushed into the hall, seized ninety-four of the guests, and led them forth to instant execution. Among these was Eric Vasa, the father of Gustavus. This wanton and wholesale massacre of his enemies failed to establish permanently the throne of the tyrant. Gustavus Vasa survived to avenge the wrongs of his country and the murder of his father. Christiern suspecting him, gained possession of his person by artifice, and Gustavus was loaded with chains and thrown into a dungeon. A Danish noble, touched by the manly bearing and early sorrows of the youth, besought and obtained permission to become the keeper of the prisoner, binding himself, should he escape, to forfeit a large sum of money to the king. Though freed from the close confinement of a prison, the spirit of Gustavus chafed under the inactivity of his life: a sense of injury rankled in his breast, and he longed impatiently for the moment when he might rise and call on his country to free itself. He watched anxiously for some means of escape, and at length eluded the vigilance of his keeper, and in the disguise of a sailor fled to Sweden. It seems an ungenerous return to the Danish nobleman who had shewn him so much kindness to leave him thus exposed to Christiern's anger; but Gustavus was not one to forget benefits, and when fortune favoured him, he failed not to testify his gratitude by substantial marks of his regard. The state in which he found his unhappy country grieved him to the soul. Christiern's cruelty had spread terror throughout the land; not a home but had been invaded, not a hearth but had been desolated, by his ferocious soldiery. The Swedes, sunk in misery, dared not even murmur, for all complaints were regarded as

rebellion, and every sound of woe was stifled by fear. None ventured to appear in mourning for those relatives who had fallen victims to the despot's sword, and even a silent look of grief became a cause of suspicion. Gustavus felt himself avoided by all whom he had trusted ; and, hopeless of arousing his panic-stricken countrymen to immediate action, he wandered from place to place exposed to danger at every step, and seeing in every town and village the proclamation of rewards for his capture, dead or alive. He encountered a thousand perils, and met with so many hairbreadth escapes, that it seems a miracle he survived. One day, being closely pursued by the soldiers who were scouring the country in search of him, he eluded them by concealing himself under some bundles of hay piled on a cart ; and thus hidden he passed through the midst of his enemies. At another time, worn out with fatigue and hunger, he begged for shelter in the house of a peasant, named Peterson, who readily opened his doors to the fugitive, resolving basely to sacrifice his guest and secure the promised reward. He placed refreshment before the wearied traveller, and urging him to partake freely, he secretly left the house, and hastened to the nearest encampment of troops, to report the prize he held in his power. Happily for Gustavus, however, the wife of his betrayer scorned her husband's ungenerous act, and warning him of his danger led him to the stable, and pointing to the fleetest horse bade him mount instantly and fly. Peterson, on his return with the soldiers, was furious at the escape of his victim ; but pursuit was useless, as Gustavus was already far beyond their power. These constantly recurring dangers at length induced Gustavus Vasa to fly from society and seek refuge in the remotest corner of Sweden.

There lies between the lofty mountains which separate Sweden from Norway, a district called Dalecarlia, inhabited by a simple and half-civilised race, whose principal occupation consists in working the copper-mines which abound in that country. Thither Gustavus fled, and assuming the dress of one of these labourers, he submitted to all the deprivations of their life, and worked with them in the mines. In this obscure retreat he deemed himself safe from his enemies, and patiently awaited the moment when he might excite his countrymen to throw off the tyrant's yoke.

In spite, however, of all his caution, Gustavus was discovered. The woman in whose house he lodged perceiving that the linen he wore under the coarse and ragged dress of a miner was of the finest quality, imparted the discovery to her friends, and Gustavus

became an object of wonder and suspicion. It was rumoured that he was a foreigner of distinction in disguise, whilst some said he was one of Christiern's spies. At length the news reached the ears of a nobleman, who had met Vasa in Stockholm; he immediately recognised him, and, aware of the risk he ran by acknowledging such a dangerous acquaintance, he invited him by night to his house. After much conversation, Gustavus, overjoyed at being once more in the society of his equal in rank and education, disclosed to him his plan for the delivery of his country. But he found in his auditor no friend to so bold an undertaking; timid and irresolute, the nobleman was terrified at the proposition, and declined all participation in so perilous a scheme. Vasa then entreated him to keep silence on the subject, and by the advice of his friend, who was glad to be rid of so dangerous a guest, he took up his residence with a clergyman in the neighbourhood. The zealous pastor welcomed him with open arms, and when Gustavus unfolded to him his schemes of redeeming his country from servitude, the old man's eyes overflowed with tears of joy; and, though his obscurity and poverty debarred him from affording any more substantial assistance, he willingly proffered his advice, and gave his house as an asylum to the proscribed Vasa. At length, weary of the long delay, and seeing no hope of rousing the wealthier and more influential Swedes, our hero, with the courage and determination characteristic of a great man, determined to avail himself of the means within his reach; and rude and uncultivated as the Dalecarlians were, he resolved to bend them to his purpose, and make them the first instruments in the great struggle for liberty. While working in the mines, he had gained the admiration and respect of his fellow-labourers, by his courage and recklessness of danger, and they already looked up to him as a superior. From his friend the curate he learned that in a few days the peasantry would assemble in large numbers for the celebration of an annual festival; and he at once determined to avail himself of this opportunity, and endeavour, by an earnest appeal to the sacredness of the cause, to arouse the ardour of the people.

On the day of the festival he appeared among his former companions, no longer the poor and ragged miner, but as the people's friend, the injured and proscribed noble, who burned to avenge his own and his country's wrongs. In a few words he made known his intention to the assembled multitude, and forcibly representing the degraded state of Sweden, and the atrocities of Christiern, he

called upon them to rise and join his standard, and offered himself to be their leader. He was listened to with breathless attention, but although his eloquence touched their feelings, no voice raised a cry of assent. Gustavus felt the silence fall heavily on his heart; when suddenly an old man exclaimed, "Let us follow him! God, you see, favours the design—the wind blows from the north, and success must attend the enterprise."

Thus superstition accomplished what the feeling of injury and the impassioned eloquence of Vasa failed to effect. A tradition existed amongst this poor and rude people, that if at the commencement of any undertaking the wind should suddenly veer to the north, it was a sure omen that God would approve the design. The voice of the old man was drowned amidst the acclamations of



the surrounding crowds, and Gustavus immediately found himself the leader of an immense though wholly undisciplined army. Onwards they marched, gaining fresh reinforcements at every step; for the Swedes, though cautious in compromising themselves by joining an unknown individual, no sooner saw this immense host descending from the mountains like an avalanche, sweeping all before it, than they flew to arms and joined the throng.

The fury of the Danish monarch passed all bounds when the news of the insurrection reached him, and, with his characteristic ferocity, he caused the unoffending mother and sister of Vasa, who were unhappily his prisoners, to be cruelly murdered. This

new act of barbarity only imparted increased vigour to the efforts of Gustavus and his followers. Every day he was joined by fresh adherents; as he approached the towns, the inhabitants rose to arms, and driving forth the Danes, slaughtered them in the open country. Stockholm was the last town they captured; here the flower of the Danish forces was collected; but Gustavus blockaded the city, and soon caused it to surrender.

Gustavus entered Stockholm in triumph, at the head of his brave soldiers; his first act was to repair to the principal church and publicly to return thanks for the deliverance of his country; his next impulse was to remember all who had been kind to him in adversity,—the Danish nobleman, from whose castle he had first escaped,—Peterson's wife, by whose timely warning his life had been preserved,—and last, though not least, the venerable curate who had sheltered him after his discovery at the mines. When he was told that the good old man was dead, he caused a crown of gold to be placed on the church of his village, that all might see how gratefully his kind acts were remembered, even in death.

With one voice Gustavus was elected king; and, yielding to the entreaties of the people, he consented to guide and govern the country he had saved. Great as he was as a general, whilst fighting bravely at the head of his army for the freedom of his country, he proved himself a still nobler hero when, raised to the throne, he cast aside all personal ambition, and wearing his new dignity with modesty and discretion, devoted his energies with single-hearted patriotism to promote the welfare of his people and the greatness of his country. We cannot pursue his history further, and will leave him in his glory, content to know that under his wise administration Sweden threw off all remains of barbarism, and rose to the rank of one of the civilised kingdoms of Europe. He lived to the advanced age of seventy, retaining his vigour of mind and body, and devoting himself to the last moment of his existence to the service of his country. He died amidst the heartfelt lamentations of his people, who regarded him as a father.

THE CLOUD.

Translated from the German by Miss Margaret Taylor.

ONE sultry summer's morning a little cloud rose out of the sea, and glided lightly, like a playful child, through the blue sky and over the wide earth which lay beneath it, gloomy and parched

by the long drought. As the cloudlet sailed along, she saw far beneath her the poor labourers toiling in the sweat of their brow, whilst she was wafted gently along by the soft morning breeze, without either care or toil. "Ah!" said she, "could I but do something to lighten the labours of these poor men upon the earth, drive away their cares, give food to the hungry, and refreshment to the thirsty!"

The day advanced, and the cloud grew bigger and bigger; and as she grew, her desire to devote her life to mankind grew likewise stronger. But the heat waxed more intense upon the earth; the sun's rays burned like a very fire, till the wearied labourers nearly fainted in the fields; and yet they worked on and on, for they were very poor. From time to time they cast a piteous look up at the cloud, as much as to say, "Ah, that you would help us!"

"I *will* help you," said the cloud; and she began to sink gently down. But presently she recalled what she had once heard when a little child, in the depths of the sea, that if a cloud ventures too near the earth, she dies. For awhile she wavered, and was driven hither and thither by her thoughts; but at length she stood still, and with all the gladness of a good resolution she cried, "Ye weary men who are toiling on the earth, I will help you."

Filled with this thought, the cloud suddenly expanded to a gigantic size; she had never imagined herself capable of such greatness. Like an angel of blessing, she stood above the earth and spread her wings over the parched fields, and her form became so glorious—so awful, that she filled man and beast with fear; and the trees and grass bent before her, while yet they well knew that she was their benefactor.

"Ay, I will help you," said the cloud again: "receive me—I die for you." A sudden will at this moment darted through her whole form; a brilliant flash gleamed across her, and the thunder reverberated around. Strong was that will, and stronger still the love, penetrated by which she fell, and dissolved in a shower that dropped blessings upon the earth. The rain was her work—the rain was also her death, and the act was glorious. Far over the land, as wide as the rain extended, a brilliant bow arose, formed of the purest rays of heaven's height: it was the last greeting of that pure and self-sacrificing spirit of love. The rainbow vanished, but the blessing of the cloud long rested upon the land which she had saved.

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